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LIFE AND LETTERS

OF

FREDERICK W. ROBERTSON. M.A.

VOL. I.

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BY THE LATE

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Ever yr affectionate Minister

Fred: W. Robertson.

LIFE AND LETTERS

OF

FREDERICK W. ROBERTSON, M.A.

INCUMBENT OF TRINITY CHAPEL, BRIGHTON, 1847-53.

EDITED BY

STOPFORD A. BROOKE, M.A.

LATE CHAPLAIN TO THE EMBASSY AT BERLIN.

20280

IN TWO VOLUMES : WITH PORTRAITS.

VOLUME I.

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PREFACE.

THERE would seem to be no apology necessary for presenting to the Public the Life and Letters of FREDERICK W. ROBERTSON.

The abiding influence of his published writings on all those readers who are capable of being interested in spiritual questions and in Christian experience, has awakened in them a desire to know more of his career.

Constant allusions made in the Public Press and in Reviews to his pre-eminence as a Preacher—the wide diffusion of his Sermons not only over this Kingdom but also over part of the Continent and of America—the interest in his teaching, which now (more than twelve years after his death) is increasing rather than diminishing, have led men to ask whether his life corresponded to the Ideal pictured in his writings—whether his private

letters would be worthy companions of his public utterances.

The friends who lived with him and loved him — his Congregation, and especially those Working Men of Brighton with whom he was connected—have long and eagerly wished to have some record of his life.

Those on the other hand who knew him not, but who since his death have learned to reverence him as their Teacher—who have found in his sermons a living source of Impulse, a practical direction of Thought, a key to many of the problems of Theology, and above all a path to Spiritual Freedom,—these, with an amount of feeling rarely given to one personally unknown, have hoped to possess some more intimate memorial of him, without whose life they had not lived.

For these reasons this Book has been undertaken.

The publication of Mr. Robertson's Letters was considered to be of great importance. They seemed to add a personal interest to his Sermons, to explain fully his mode of thought, to indicate the source and progress of many of his views, and to supplement his general teaching. They are full of tender human thought, of subtle and delicate feeling, and of much tried and suggestive experience.

They possess also, in common with his Sermons,

a peculiar literary interest. This interest lies not so much in the originality of their ideas as in the mode in which these ideas are represented. The choice of words in them is remarkable. There is sometimes a happy indefiniteness which belongs to and which suggests the infinite nature of the things discussed. A spirit pervades them which influences unconsciously their reader, and renders him receptive of their truths, by inducing in him a kindred tone of heart. Even Robertson's slight sketches of an idea, traced perhaps in a single sentence, contain the materials for a finished composition. If he is not a Creator he is eminently a lucid Interpreter of thought. It is in this power of apt, logical, and striking expression that the chief *literary* interest of his writings consists.

I cannot but believe also that the noble truthful life he lived, and the 'very courageous' battle which he fought, will have an influence as real and as helpful as his Sermons.

The inadequacy with which this Life has been represented cannot be more a subject of regret to his friends than it is to myself. The fault can only, perhaps, be pardoned for the sake of the love and reverence with which the following pages have been written.

I have to thank many of his friends, and espe-

cially his father, Captain Robertson, for their assistance and advice.

I wish to draw attention to the interesting letters written from the Tyrol to Mrs. Robertson, and collected in the first Appendix, and to those from some of his friends which are inserted in the Text and in the second Appendix.

In conclusion, I must regret the delay in the appearance of this book. It is due partly to my absence from England, but chiefly to my desire to make the collection of Mr. Robertson's letters as complete as possible. The arrival of new matter has often compelled me to recast whole chapters, and I have waited for months in the hope of obtaining an important Correspondence, and found, at last, my hope in vain.

STOPFORD A. BROOKE.

LONDON: *Sept.* 15, 1865.

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LIFE AND LETTERS

OF

THE REV. F. W. ROBERTSON.

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Letters from May 1838 to June 1840.

FREDERICK WILLIAM ROBERTSON, the eldest of the seven children of Frederick and Sarah Robertson, was born February 3, 1816, at the house of his grandfather, Colonel Robertson, in London.

His father, who is still alive, was a captain in the Royal Artillery. Two of his brothers, Charles Dewsbury

and Harry, won frequent 'honourable mention' in the Kaffir war. The third, Struan, was a captain in the Royal South Lincoln Militia. They all survived him, but before he had reached his twenty-fifth year he had grieved over the death of his three sisters.

The first five years of his childhood were passed at Leith Fort. In 1821, his father, then Captain in the Royal Artillery, retired on half pay in order to attend to the education of his children, left Leith and settled at Beverley, in Yorkshire. There he personally instructed his son for four years, and then sent him to the grammar-school of the town, under the Rev. G. P. Richards.

In 1829, the family went to Tours, where young Robertson studied the classics with an English tutor, attended a French seminary, and laid the foundation of his accurate knowledge of the French language. In consequence of the revolution of 1830, his father returned to England, and placed the boy, now nearly sixteen years old, in the New Academy, Edinburgh, under the late Rev. John Williams, afterwards Archdeacon of Cardigan.

He owed much to the careful education and watchfulness of his parents. They kept him apart from evil influences, and made his home his most honoured recollection. This seclusion, and the books he was induced to read in childhood, were both so calculated to develope his character in a true direction, that he mentions them afterwards in some MS. notes, written at Winchester, as two of the special mercies with which

God had blessed his infancy. The loneliness which is more or less the lot of the eldest of the family, soon created in him a thoughtfulness full of imagination, and a spirit of enquiry which supplied him with the materials for a silent self-education. But on this account he became neither morbid nor unnatural. On the contrary, he was a radiant and eager child, full of healthy enjoyment of life, delighting in air, and sunlight, and active exercise. His happy childhood at Leith Fort was a cherished memory of his ministerial life, and he looked back upon it with a pleasure, deepened by the necessarily sedentary nature of his profession. In 1849, he writes from Brighton :—

> My pony, and my cricket, and my rabbits, and my father's pointers, and the days when I proudly carried his game-bag, and my ride home with the old gamekeeper by moonlight in the frosty evenings, and the boom of the cannon, and my father's orderly, the artilleryman who used to walk with me hand-in-hand—these are my earliest recollections.

Even at that time there seems to have been nothing in external nature which did not give him pleasure, and awake in him a vivid interest. The fresh winds, and sunlight, and clear waters, which he enjoyed at Leith, seem to have infused their own spirit into his receptive organisation. He wandered over the country with an open eye and heart, and found in every walk and ride something to admire and to love. He had a child's affection and reverence for animals, and especially for birds. He studied their natural history; he watched them to their haunts; he rejoiced in the freedom of

their life as if it had been his own; he even began a book in which he made drawings of them, with notes on their habits and habitations. Many will remember the passage in one of his lectures on Poetry, in which he notices with enthusiasm Wilson's work on 'Birds,' and Waterton's 'Wanderings,' and describes with the minuteness of affection the series of stuffed birds which illustrated falconry in the Exhibition of 1851. 'I have visited,' he says, 'the finest museums in Europe, and spent many a long day in watching the habits of birds in the woods, hidden and unseen by them; but I never saw the reproduction of life till I saw these.'

He describes himself, in boyhood, 'as iron in strength, broad and stout.' He excelled in manly games and athletic exercises, and was the leader of all the daring exploits of his companions. To this he joined a love of reading and of quiet remarkable at his age. On the brightest day he would become entranced in some tale of chivalry or imagination which charmed him into stillness. He loved to fancy himself a knight —seeking adventure, redressing wrongs, laying down his life for maidens in distress; and often for hours together the vividness of these imaginary pictures would separate him from the commonly thoughtless activity of a boy's life, and exile him from his companions. Lying at the root of much of this dreaminess, was the sensitiveness of nerve and feeling which so strongly marked and influenced his whole existence. It betrayed its presence during boyhood in his shy and sometimes defiant manner, and in a settled self-

mistrust, often sinking into hopelessness. 'Deficiency of hope,' he says himself, 'is the great fault of my character.'

Such a temperament, without his strong will and stern sense of duty, would naturally have led him into idleness. But it was not so with him. In childhood he learned quickly, and mastered fully what he had learnt. His memory was retentive, and in later years he could recall with ease page after page of books which he had not read since his boyhood. But this power never stole from him his conviction that perseverance in labour was the only foundation of real knowledge. He was an intense worker. He never left a subject till he had done his utmost to exhaust it, and to examine it in all its bearings. At the Academy in Edinburgh, his toil was incessant, and he soon took a high place in his class. Though without the advantage of previous training in the lower forms, he gained at the end of the session the first prizes for Latin verse, English prose, the French language, and French recitation, and contested so sharply the prize given to the best Greek scholar, that the decision was referred to Professor Sandford, who gave it in favour of the Dux of the Academy—George Moncrieff, with whom, as boy and man, Robertson maintained an unbroken friendship.

All this success surprised no one more than himself; he continually wrote home in depreciation of his work. This self-mistrust made him even then acutely conscious of small errors. In composition, he magnified slight

failures in the rhythm and style of a sentence into grave faults; he was intolerant of a misplaced stop; he shrank with all the over-subtle purism of a boy from a mispronunciation or an antiquated pronunciation of words. He carried this humility and sensitiveness into morals; the slightest deviation from truthfulness in words or truthfulness in action was abhorrent to his nature. His mother said of him, 'I never knew him tell a lie;' and he would rather have lost every prize at the Academy, than owe one to foreign help or to the usual aid which boys seek from translations.

The principal of the academy soon recognised the character he had to deal with, and gave him repeated encouragement, and of this he speaks with grateful appreciation. Without sympathy he would have been hopeless, although he would not have ceased to work; for there was mingled in him the womanliness which seeks for external help, and the manliness which performs a duty even in loneliness. To romance, sensitiveness, delicacy, humility, great gentleness, he added, even at this early age; a practical view of life, calm good sense, steady adherence to right, unselfishness, and a courage at once enthusiastic and prudent. Two letters, written when he was sixteen years old, to his mother and brother, shortly after the cholera appeared at Edinburgh, will illustrate some of these points of character:—

February 26, 1832.

My dear Mother,—You need be under no apprehension concerning the cholera, as the cases here, upon an average,

are one a week, or something of that kind. If, however, it should increase in violence, I have made up my mind to remain here. In the first place, I should bring infection home, and it would be extremely selfish to bring others into danger merely for my own private safety. In the next place, instead of escaping it, I might only rush into danger in my journey. I am sorry to say, that because I kept a good place at first in my class, the Rector said to several persons that he expected me to be second at the end of the year. He will, I am sorry to say, soon find out his mistake, as I am terribly behind-hand in several things. Ten o'clock P.M.—I have just finished fagging hard for to-morrow.

July 2, 1832.

My dear Brother,—Tell papa that my suspicions about the French composition prize were but too well founded; for this morning, Monsieur Braed, after I had endeavoured for a long time to get it out of him, acknowledged that he had given the prize to Moncrieff. He then put me in a very trying situation, by asking me to recite it (Moncrieff's) on the exhibition day. I told him I could not decide, but would give him an answer to-morrow. Though it is hard upon me to be thus made the herald of my own defeat, I have determined to comply, partly for Moncrieff's sake, and partly because I am determined that whatever I feel, it shall not be visible. A few days ago the Academical Club, or rather a deputation, waited on the Rector to announce the decision upon the English verses given in a long time ago. The seventh, sixth, and fifth classes were summoned into the Rector's class-room, and the prize was decided to have been gained by Terrot in my class. After he had recited his verses, we were told that all the other copies which had been given in were very meritorious, but that the two next in merit to Terrot's were so equal, that they had been unable to decide between them. I was astonished by hearing my motto read out as one of

them, and still more so when I was called upon to recite them. Imagine me standing elevated upon the Rector's platform, and feeling more like a criminal than anything else. I trembled so violently that I could not hold the paper steady, and do not know how I managed to get to the end. The deafening claps of the boys were the first thing that brought me to my senses. I cannot imagine what I shall do when I recite the French in the public hall with several hundred spectators, when I felt so uncomfortable by just reading before a hundred and twenty boys, most of whom I knew, the masters, and a few of the directors, and the Academical Club.

At the end of the session he left the Academy, and, under the care of Mr. Terrot, afterwards Bishop of Edinburgh, attended the various classes at the University, and at the age of eighteen returned home, bringing with him a large amount of multifarious knowledge and many memories of a pleasant life and profitable study. Of his general reading at Edinburgh there is no record, but he had devoted himself eagerly to practical chemistry and physical geography. There remains among his papers a MS. book full of notes of Professor Jamieson's lectures, and illustrated by drawings, which manifest the artistic talents which he afterwards cultivated, and then, when he had attained to some excellence, characteristically despised.

But his interest in all these things was small in comparison with his enthusiasm for a military life. This was literally born with him. At Leith, before he was five years old, he drank in, with all the eagerness of a boy, the intoxicating aroma of his father's profession. 'I was rocked and cradled,' he writes, 'to the roar of

artillery, and the very name of such things sounds to me like home. A review, suggesting the conception of a real battle, impresses me to tears; I cannot see a regiment manœuvre, nor artillery in motion, without a choking sensation.'

The traditions of his family suggested and fostered this passionate love of arms. The conversation at home was full of recollections of bivouac and battle, and of the daring exploits of Sir Charles Napier, who was his father's personal friend. He writes from the Academy to his brother, begging that the miniature fort in the garden at home might not be blown up till he arrived. He argued daily with his French masters on military engineering. It is no wonder that, on leaving Edinburgh, the secret wish of his heart to enter the army had grown into a settled purpose. This was not, however, the intention of his father, who considered that the character of his son, and his deep religious feeling, were unfitted for a barrack life. The church was, therefore, proposed to him as a profession; but his answer was decisive—'Anything but that: I am not fit for it.'

He was then (1833) articled to Mr. Boston, a solicitor at Bury St. Edmunds, and passed a year in his office. But the sedentary nature of the work broke down his health; and Captain Robertson discovered that his son had adopted a profession which he detested, only through a feeling of chivalrous obedience. It was then resolved that he should follow the bent of his genius. An application was made to the Horse Guards for a

commission. It was refused on the ground of age. But his mother's family had been fortunate enough to do the King, when Prince William, some service, and the refusal was retracted. His name was placed upon the list for a cavalry regiment serving in India. He was enraptured, and immediately began to study for his profession with enthusiasm. He went to stay with his brother in the Engineers, at Chatham, to gain an insight into practical engineering. His whole soul was in his work. He recalls in later letters that time:—'On that road I had walked and ridden, oh, how often; exulting in the future, fearless, full of hope, and feeling the perfection of the present; days when I was prodigal of happiness.'

A spirit so buoyant and enthusiastic fitted him well for the army, and he became a first-rate rider, a good shot, and an excellent draughtsman. He omitted nothing likely to make him a faithful and useful officer. In hope and work two years were thus passed by, during which he lived with his family at Cheltenham. There it was that Captain Robertson, under the impression that his application to the King had been forgotten, again proposed to his son the profession of the Church, and again was answered by a firm refusal. The temptations to which he would be exposed in the army were strongly set before him, but he could not believe that they were any real barriers against his entrance into it; on the contrary, with his usual desire for some positive outward evil to contend with, he imagined that it was his peculiar vocation to bear witness to God, to set

the example of a pure and Christian life in his corps, to be the Cornelius of his regiment. The trained obedience of an army to one head, harmonised with his own strong conception of the beauty of order and the dignity of duty. All the impulses of his character to self-sacrifice, chivalry, daring, romantic adventure, the conquest of oppression, the living of life intensely, he looked forward to satisfying as a soldier; and he believed that the active out-door existence of a campaign, with its danger and excitement, would suit his physical temperament, and tend to neutralise his constitutional nervousness.

Associated in remarkable contrast with his vivid outward life and activity at this time, was an inward life, peculiarly sensitive, subtle in thought, more subtle still in feeling, full of poetry and of religious sentiment. It was impossible to express in prose the minuter shades of feeling which passed over his heart as boyhood grew into youth, and he began at this period to read poetry with greater eagerness and to write verses. His own efforts are, strange to say, characterised by almost no imagination, and curiously devoid of poetical talent. The influence of Pope, of whom he was now an ardent admirer, seems to have clogged all his attempts at English verse. Striving after the terseness of thought and sharp clearness of expression which mark his model, he naturally became incapable of putting into verse delicate dreams of intuitive feeling. Perhaps it was owing to his discovery of this want that he ceased for a time to read Pope, and turned in preference to Byron and Shakspeare.

To two great objects—the profession of arms which he had chosen, and the service of Christ in that profession—he now devoted himself wholly. They filled his life, and for both of them he read carefully. It marks his honesty and sincerity of purpose, that immediately on making sure of his Indian commission, he gave himself up to preparation for service in that country. He would have thought it a sin against truthfulness of character, if he had adopted a career without a special training for his work. With this purpose he studied the early history and geography of India, and the characters of its various populations. He mapped the campaigns and made himself master of the strategical movements of the British generals in that country. The fortunes of India, and the constitution which the English had elaborated for their large dependency, became familiar to him. It is interesting to observe how fondly he recalled at Brighton these youthful studies, how he followed the course of the Sikh war, and read with careful pleasure the exploits of Napier and the story of Major Edwardes' career. In a series of lectures delivered at Brighton, and unfortunately lost, he treated of Christianity as it would come into contact with Hindooism with the same wide grasp of principles, and in the same manner, as he dealt with the advent of Christ to the Greek, Roman, and Barbarian. The seed of which these lectures were the flower, was sown at this time.

Parallel with his military reading, in rather a strange contrast, ran his religious reading. Sometimes both

glided into one another, as when, in the hope of advancing Christ's kingdom, he devoted a portion of his time to the history of Indian missions, and the study of the reasons of their small success; and with a rare wisdom, the need of which has at last been recognised, gained all the information accessible to him upon the religion of the Hindoos. At other times, his reading was entirely theological. Towards the end of 1836, he seems to have almost given up the hope of hearing favourably from the Horse Guards, and, with a kind of presentiment, began to labour at books on Evidences and on Prophecy. Then again, as if the hope of a military life had reawakened, he analysed the Jugurthine war. In his common-place book may be seen the fluctuations of his mind between the Church and the Army as professions, or, at least, his desire to bring Christianity into a soldier's life.

All these fair hopes were destined to disappointment. Looking back now on his career as a clergyman, and considering the wide influence which his published sermons have had in England, it is interesting to trace how he was apparently impelled by circumstances into the clerical profession.

In March 1837, he met Mr. Davies, now Vicar of Tewkesbury, at the house of a common friend in Cheltenham. A close friendship soon sprung up between them. Mr. Davies, believing that he saw in Robertson all the elements which would form a successful and devoted minister of the Church, endeavoured to

dissuade him from entering the army.* He replied, 'that the matter had been already settled, that application had been made long ago, and interest employed to obtain a commission.' He added, 'I do not become a soldier to win laurels: my object is to do good.' Mr. Davies, however, did not desist till he had obtained from him a promise to allow the whole matter to be reconsidered. His mind, however, remained fixed in its previous resolution. Three weeks only before he entered Oxford his father said to him, 'I think you had better reconsider your plans and enter the Church.' He answered, energetically, 'No, never!' The following

* Mr. Davies thus relates the origin of their friendship:—'The daughter of Lady Trench, at whose house I met my friend, had been seriously ill. She was prevented from sleeping by the barking of a dog in one of the adjoining houses. This house was Captain Robertson's. A letter was written to ask that the dog might be removed; and so kind and acquiescent a reply was returned, that Lady Trench called to express her thanks. She was much struck at that visit by the manner and bearing of the eldest son, and, in consequence, an intimacy grew up between the families.'

This apparently trivial circumstance is mentioned, because in one of Mr. Robertson's papers a curious allusion to it has been found, which proves that this intimacy promoted the change of his profession. He is speaking of one of his favourite theories—that all great truths consist of two opposites which are not contradictory. 'All is free,' he says: 'that is false; all is fated—that is false. All things are free and fated—that is true. I cannot overthrow the argument of the man who says that everything is fated, or, in other words, that God orders all things, and cannot change that order. If I had not met a certain person, I should not have changed my profession: if I had not known a certain lady, I should not probably have met this person: if that lady had not had a delicate daughter who was disturbed by the barking of my dog: if my dog had not barked that night, I should now have been in the Dragoons, or fertilising the soil of India. Who can say that these things were not ordered; and that, apparently, the merest trifles did not produce failure and a marred existence?'

day he met Mr. Daly, now the Bishop of Cashel, at Lady Trench's. It struck him as singular that Mr. Daly should ask him, so soon after his father's suggestion, 'Whether it were definitely settled that he should go into the army?' After some conversation, he enquired, 'What would you advise me to do?' Mr. Daly, who, much impressed by his unaffected piety, desired to see him in the Church, answered: 'Do as your father likes, and pray to God to direct your father aright.' His friends also at Cheltenham urged the same upon him. He spoke then to his father, and left the final decision in his hands. With a romantic instinct of self-sacrifice, which transcended the bounds of prudence, he resolved to give up the idea of his whole life. Yet he would scarcely have done this had not his strong sense of duty been appealed to by the arguments of his friends, and had not his characteristic self-mistrust disposed him to believe that he was himself the worst judge of his future profession.

His father, after anxious consideration, decided, at last, to send him up immediately to Oxford with Mr. Davies. With some difficulty, and, through the interest of Mr. Churton, who wished to secure him for his college, a vacancy was found for him in Brazenose. He wrote home to state this, and added, with evidently a lingering wish for the army, 'What shall I do?' He shrank with deep pain from completing the sacrifice. But his father wrote to say, 'Accept it;' and on May 4, 1837, he was examined and matriculated.

A fortnight afterwards, the long-expected letter came

from the military secretary, offering him a cavalry commission. Had it arrived three weeks sooner, he had never entered the Church; but arriving after his matriculation, his father considered that God had directed the circumstances and the commission was declined.

He was now twenty years old, and, accepting, somewhat sternly, his destiny, he began his university career.

Before entering on residence, he spent much time with Mr. Davies. They walked daily together, and his friend, anxious lest he should have forced his inclinations, asked him frequently whether he was satisfied with what had been done. He would never answer directly, but only quietly reply, 'Wait; some day I will tell you.'

Often (Mr. Davies writes) when passing a soldier in the street, has he tightly pressed my arm, observing, 'Well, so I am to have nothing to do with them;' and at other times, 'Poor fellows, they are but little thought of; few care for their souls.' I can never forget the feeling and energetic manner in which he would quote at length the passage from Coleridge's 'Sybilline Leaves,' dwelling with marked emphasis on the lines—

> As if the soldier died without a wound;
> As if the fibres of this godlike frame
> Were gored without a pang; as if the wretch
> Who fell in battle, doing bloody deeds,
> Passed off to Heaven, translated and not killed;
> As though he had no wife to pine for him,
> No God to judge him.

It was with great delight that he told me that the application for a commission had been successful, for it would not be said that he went into the church because he could not get into the army.

During the summer he went up the Wye, and visited Tintern by moonlight. Mr. Davies, who accompanied him, remembers that he always collected the servants of the several inns to evening prayers, and recals his intense and romantic enjoyment of the scenery; and

Yet (continues Mr. Davies), with all this poetical sense of life and nature, I never knew anyone who took a more correct view of life, and who was more anxious to deal in a manly and Christian way with its realities.

At the time to which I refer I never knew him otherwise than cheerful, and there were times when his spirits were exuberant, times when he was in the mood of thoroughly enjoying everything. With him as I was, daily and hourly, I can testify that he was a constant and prayerful student of his Bible. . . . . He possessed a very logical mind, and in argument was a close and accurate reasoner. At this time, he held firmly what are understood as evangelical views, and for these he would mildly but perseveringly contend. He advocated strongly the pre-millennial advent of Christ. But one who was more free from the shibboleths of a party, or more abhorrent from anything like cant, or one who regarded others with a more large-hearted charity, I never knew.

In October 1837, Mr. Robertson became a resident at Brazenose. With his deep and cultivated interest in all the variations of religious opinion, he at once came into contact with the movement which engrossed a large portion of the most remarkable men in the university, under the leadership of John Henry Newman. Several efforts were made to induce Mr. Robertson to join this party. He had himself been much impressed by a sermon of Mr. Newman's 'On Sin after Baptism,' and

the contest which arose in his mind from his sense of the fervour and sincerity of religious feeling which marked the Tract school, and his own instinctive recoil from the doctrines which they held, resulted in a state of deep mental depression. But depression never at any time of his life was permitted to pass the point where it merges into intellectual or spiritual slothfulness; and now, as always, it spurred him into activity. He began immediately to study critically the Acts of the Apostles, and he wrote to his father to say that he had not gone through the book before he felt satisfied that, on the subject of baptism at least, the Tractarian school was in error. With a calmer mind than before, he now endeavoured to make himself master of Mr. Newman's opinions, and to refute them. His copy of Tract 90, and of Dr. Pusey's letter to the Bishop of Oxford, are largely annotated by his answers to their arguments. He seems to have read carefully about this time, as books bearing on the whole subject—'Collier's History,' 'Calvin's Institutes,' 'Ranke's History of the Popes,' and many of the replies published at Oxford in 1838–39.

From the main conviction with regard to Mr. Newman's opinions which he then attained he never afterwards swerved. But he did not join then, or at any time, in the persecution and slander with which the Tractarians were assailed. He invariably spoke bravely —and that when brave speaking was dangerous to his position—in behalf of their manliness, devotion, and practical work.

Nor was he content with convincing himself of the errors of the prominent school at Oxford. He endeavoured to counteract its influence among his personal friends, by setting on foot a society for the purpose of prayer and conversation on the Scriptures. It was organised, and consisted of seven members, but after lingering through a term or two it died in 1839.

The necessity of an accurate and critical knowledge of the Bible became more clear to him from this contact with various forms of religious thought. It was his habit when dressing in the morning to commit to memory daily a certain number of verses of the New Testament. In this way, before leaving the university, he had gone twice over the English version, and once and a half through the Greek. With his eminent power of arrangement, he mentally combined and recombined all the prominent texts under fixed heads of subjects. He said long afterwards to a friend, that, owing to this practice, no sooner was any Christian doctrine or duty mentioned in conversation or suggested to him by what he was writing, than all the passages bearing on the point seemed to array themselves in order before him.

No change took place in his doctrinal views, which were those of the Evangelical school, with a decided leaning to moderate Calvinism. They were mingled with a rare charity and tolerance, which seem, however, in the excitement of argument, to have sometimes failed him. He took a large interest in missionary work, especially in that among the Jews. The society

mentioned above, for the short term of its existence, became one of the centres of correspondence which were established in England with the leading foreign mission stations. He strove to interest others in Christian enterprise; but his enthusiasm, though not frozen, was chilled by the apathy and coldness of Oxford. To his excitable and eager temperament, the trim system, the 'donnishness' which gave the tone to the life and studies of reading men, were dreary and sleepy and too hedged in by unelastic rules. With the Utopianism of a young man, he could not at first see that a large and varied society must be governed not by love, but by law; that if the intellect is to be well trained, it must be restricted to a few subjects, and forbidden to travel over wider fields till it has gained sufficient power.

His Christian fervour, for which he found so little food in Oxford, he maintained by bold speaking and brave action.

> I rejoice to think of him (writes one of his friends) as I knew him at Oxford—warm, and generous, and noble hearted; conspicuous for talent, irreproachable in conduct; and, what was most of all valuable, and the most cheering subject of retrospect now, one who carried the banner of the Cross without fear, and was not ashamed of Christ in a place which, though professedly consecrated to His service, offered perhaps more hindrances than helps to a decidedly Christian profession.

He read steadily, though not severely, the usual course. On every side his imagination seems to have lured him away from the confined sphere of university reading to subjects suggested by his studies. This, and, I imagine,

a want of enthusiasm for collegiate life and reading, born of regret for the loss of the real profession of his heart, with the addition, perhaps, of his constitutional diffidence, were the reasons why he never aspired to collegiate honours. At first, however, he plunged eagerly, too eagerly, into work. He attended lectures for sixteen hours in the week. He mingled with his necessary labours the recreation which natural history afforded him. He listened with pleasure to the wit, learning, and imagination with which Dr. Buckland charmed his geological class. Plato fascinated him. The poetry, the idealism, the complete power with which the Greek philosopher used the most perfect organ of human thought, delighted a mind essentially imaginative, and a taste which demanded that thought should be expressed not only in accurate, but in polished language. Yet he saw the defects of Plato, and turned to Aristotle, to balance the scale of his thought. He studied both with untiring labour, and he declared many years afterwards that their writings, with those of Edwards, 'had passed like the iron atoms of the blood into his mental constitution.' Aristotle gradually won a great influence over his intellect, and it is possible again and again to trace in his sermons niceties of mental distinction which owe their subtlety to his intimate knowledge of the 'Ethics.' With the study of these he combined that of Bishop Butler's works, whose sermons and 'Analogy' he seems to have completely mastered. Yet he never lost his passion for Plato. He mentions him as—

One of the poets who, when his brain was throbbing, and his mind incapable of originating a thought, and his body worn and sore with exhaustion, made him know what it was to feel the jar of nerve gradually cease, and the darkness in which all life had robed itself to the imagination become light, discord pass into harmony, and physical exhaustion rise by degrees into the consciousness of power.*

These words are sufficient to mark how much he owed to the writers whom he revered, and explain much of the deep depression and strong excitement which characterised at once his life and his preaching in after years. If many a time his own imagination was refreshed and kindled by that of another, only too often also for health and mental power his imagination dominated, not over his will, but over his nerves. He was not subdued by the sad and bitter creations of his own heart, but he suffered, and suffered terribly, in conquering them.

During the beginning of his college life, the poets which seem most to have attracted him were Shelley and Coleridge; but the more his thoughtfulness deepened, the more he gave to Wordsworth a veneration which increased as life wore on, and which gained additional depth from the respect which he felt for the poet's character. The following quotation from one of his lectures on Wordsworth will show that this reverence took root at an early period in his mind. It bears testimony also to the influence which Dr. Arnold's life had exercised over him:—

* *Lectures on Poetry.* Delivered at Brighton.

I remember myself one of the most public exhibitions of this change in public feeling. It was my lot, during a short university career, to witness a transition and a reaction, or revulsion of public feeling, with respect to two great men, whom I have already mentioned and contrasted. The first of these was one who was every inch a man—Arnold, of Rugby. You will all recollect how in his earlier life Arnold was covered with suspicion and obloquy, how the wise men of that day charged him with latitudinarianism, and I know not with how many other heresies. But the public opinion altered, and he came to Oxford, and read lectures on modern history.

Such a scene had not been seen in Oxford before. The lecture-room was too small; all adjourned to the Oxford Theatre; and all that was most brilliant, all that was most wise, and most distinguished, gathered together there. He walked up to the rostrum with a quiet step and manly dignity. Those who had loved him when all the world despised him felt that, at last, the hour of their triumph had come. But there was something deeper than any personal triumph they could enjoy; and those who saw him then will not soon forget the lesson read to them by his calm, dignified, simple step—a lesson teaching them the utter worthlessness of unpopularity or of popularity as a test of manhood's worth.

The second occasion was when, in the same theatre, Wordsworth came forward to receive his honorary degree. Scarcely had his name been pronounced than, from three thousand voices at once, there broke forth a burst of applause, echoed and taken up again and again when it seemed about to die away, and that thrice repeated—a cry in which—

> Old England's heart and voice unite,
> Whether she hail the wine cup or the fight,
> Or bid each hand be strong, or bid each heart be light.

There were young eyes there filled with an emotion of which

they had no need to be ashamed; there were hearts beating with the proud feeling of triumph, that, at last, the world had recognised the merit of the man they had loved so long, and acknowledged as their teacher; and yet, when that noise was protracted, there came a reaction in their feelings, and they began to perceive that *that* was not, after all, the true reward and recompense for all that Wordsworth had done for England: it seemed as if all that noise was vulgarising the poet: it seemed more natural and desirable to think of him afar off in his simple dales and mountains, the high-priest of Nature, weaving in honoured poverty his songs to liberty and truth, than to see him there, clad in a scarlet robe, and bespattered with applause. Two young men went home together, part of the way in silence, and one only gave expression to the feelings of the other, when he quoted those well-known, trite, and often-quoted lines—lines full of deepest truth :—

> One self-approving hour whole worlds outweighs
> Of stupid starers and of loud huzzas,
> And more true joy Marcellus exiled feels,
> Than Cæsar with a senate at his heels.

This extract will give an insight into the manner of his life, and the tendency of his thought during his college career. What he felt for Wordsworth he felt for himself. Popular noise and fame were not his objects. He lived almost in seclusion. He was not extensively known at Oxford. He made but few friends; but those whom he made he clung to tenaciously, and when the circle of his intimacies was completed he did not seek to enlarge it. Few exercised much influence over him; he was rather the centre to which men converged, the magnet by which they were attracted. His acquaintance might have been extended had he joined in the manly

sports of Oxford, but he was prevented from doing so by an injury which he received in his knee at an early period of his residence. The weakness so induced continued for some months, and he never mingled in the athletic exercises of the university.

He joined the Union, however, on his entrance, and spoke frequently. In these speeches he manifested no great oratorical power. They were chiefly argumentative. But the style of speaking then in vogue at the Union did not admit of any display. Mr. Davies once accompanied him to one of the debates, and his account of it is interesting:—

On one of the occasions on which I paid Robertson a short visit at Oxford, I went with him to the Union. He was to speak that evening. The subject of debate was the moral tendency or otherwise of the Theatre. Robertson opened the discussion. I sat next to him, and he was somewhat nervous, it being about the second time that he had spoken. Before he got up to speak, pressing his hand upon my knee, he whispered in my ear, 'Davies, pray for me.' The tenor of his observations was opposed to the idea that theatrical representations could legitimately be made the channel of conveying any really good moral influence or instruction. Robertson was answered by Mr. Ruskin in a very ingenious and somewhat sarcastic speech, which excited much laughter in the room. With considerable circumlocution and innuendo he was describing a certain personage to whose influence he probably thought Robertson had, in his observations, given too much consideration, when Robertson said in my ear, 'Why! the man is describing the devil!'

It is not strange that he did not seek oratorical distinction, for it was his habit to check the dominant

tendency of his mind when it led to outward brilliancy, and he felt at this time that it was necessary to subdue imagination in order to gain accuracy in argument. Neither did he make any attempt to compete for the prizes which Oxford held out for those things in which he had succeeded in Edinburgh. Once he sent in a poem for the Newdigate, but it was unsuccessful. Yet beneath all this reticence, his enthusiasm, his vigour, his overflowing imagination, and exceeding vivid sense of life, flowed like a stream of fire.

It is probable that the clearness, force, and fulness of thought which marked his later eloquence, were owing to this wise self-restraint. He did not waste energy when his energy had not sufficient materials to enable him to exhaust a subject. Moreover, even at that time he dreaded the temptations of public honour and popular applause. How clearly he saw these dangers, and how sensitively he shrank from them, may be seen in a letter to his mother, writen from Brazenose, on hearing of the great success of one of his friends as a preacher at Cheltenham. It reads like a presentiment of the position in which he himself was to be placed. The opinions he expresses were held by him afterwards with tenfold force at Brighton :—

Brazenose, 1839.

My dear little Mother,—I hear of M——'s enthusiastic reception at Cheltenham. I do believe the station of a popular preacher is one of the greatest trials on earth : a man in that position does not stop to soberly calculate how much, or rather how little is done when there appears a great effect,

nor to consider how immense is the difference between deeply affecting the feelings and permanently changing the heart. The preacher who causes a great sensation and excited feeling is not *necessarily* the one who will receive the reward of shining as the stars for ever and for ever, because he has turned many to righteousness. Misery is a trial, but it makes this world undesirable, and persecution estranges a man from resting on earthly friends, and forces him to choose One whom he would never have chosen if any other had offered; but prosperity makes earth a home, and popularity exalts self, and invites compliance to the world. It is the old story of one winter in Capua effecting a ruin for Hannibal, which neither the snow of the Alps, nor the sun of Italy, the treachery of the Gauls, nor the prowess of the Romans, could achieve.

So passed his life at Oxford, a silent, self-contained, progressive life. There are no materials for a more extended notice, and those who have loved him in life and who love him now in death must fill up the void from the few extracts from letters which follow this chapter, and from the scattered hints which will be found in the letters which he wrote from Brighton. Two of these letters, written to a young friend who was about entering college, are so valuable as his own judgment on his academical career, and so interesting as the view which his manhood took of his youth, that they are inserted here in full:—

9 Montpelier Terrace, Brighton: June 8, 1851?

MY DEAR KENNION,—It is with some reluctance that I write to you on the subject of your studies; as, in the first place, I have no right to give an opinion; and, in the next, I quite

feel the truth of what you say in your letter to your mother, that none can decide for you a question with all the bearings of which none but yourself can be acquainted. She is extremely anxious, however, that you should decide rightly, and has written to me to ask what I think. So I am sure you will not think that I am intruding advice. The chief point seems the question of reading for honours. Now, I believe with you, that honours make little or nothing in practice, so far as they bear upon a man's future success. That is, the prestige of them does little in life—is forgotten, or slightly looked upon, by the large world. But the mental habits got insensibly during the preparation for them is, I think, incapable of being replaced by anything; and this quite independently of whether a man succeeds or fails in his attempt. To my idea the chief advantage is the precluding of discursiveness. For three years or four, a man has an aim—a long-distant, definite aim. I defy any young man to create this aim for himself. 'History, with contemporary authors,' is a very vague plan, at best. But grant it well mapped out, still he has chosen his own aim, cannot be certain he has chosen well, becomes distrustful of the wisdom of the plan, because his own; will infallibly find that ripened experience will not approve the line chosen, inasmuch as being untravelled by him, he only selects it by guess. Difficulties break his ardour; he cannot struggle with a difficulty while half sceptical as to the unalterable necessity of overcoming it; and at last, having read *de omnibus rebus et quibusdam aliis*, he finds that, whatever he may have got of bitter experience, one thing he has not got, and that is the steady habit of looking forward to a distant end, and unalterably working on it till he has attained it—the habit, in short, of never beginning anything which is not to be finished. At college I did what you are now going to do—had no one to advise me otherwise; was rather encouraged in it by religious people, who are generally—at least, the so-called

religious—the weakest of mankind; and I now feel I was utterly, mournfully, irreparably wrong. The excitement of theological controversy, questions of the day, politics, gleams and flashings of new paths of learning, led me at full speed for three years, modifying my plans perpetually. *Now* I would give 200*l.* a year to have read on a bad plan, chosen for me, but steadily.

3, Oriel Terrace: March 16, 1852?

My dear Kennion,—It seems to me that your plan would be a good one for passing your vacation. I have no doubt whatever that French will be, on the whole, more valuable to you than German; indeed, German literature and theology, as they are at present, open out to the mind such dark vistas of doubt and Pyrrhonism, that I think you would be wise in postponing the study for some years. I am sure you are right in devoting yourself to mathematics. More than, perhaps, any other study, I believe, they form a masculine and healthy tone of mind. But I fancy that you will find no *lectures* in Paris on the subject—if by lectures you mean public ones. Private lessons from professors may, of course, be obtained; only it seems to me you would get these more satisfactorily through the medium of English, as part of your mathematical time would be expended in mastering the French terms.

One thing, however, I would strongly recommend, not to put yourself down in Paris, or anywhere else abroad, *alone*. I tried this once in Oxford, during a long vacation, thinking to have more uninterrupted time for study, and found the plan a perfect failure. The mind loses its tension for want of society, its interest in its studies, and that healthy feeling of freshness which comes from alternating study with conversation. And I do not think that it would be good for a mind like yours. The best way of learning French is to get

domiciled in a respectable French family,* where there is not another Englishman. Not in one of those *pensions* which are common in Paris, and filled with English; but a private house, where you are forced into the expression of your ideas and wants in French, if they are to be expressed at all. If this plan should suit you, I would write to a friend in Paris who could give me information on this subject, and would afterwards give you an introduction to Mr. Lovett, the English clergyman there, an excellent man. Pray let me know this.

At the same time this occurs to me as a piece of truth which I myself learned too late. Your object at the university is mental discipline—not merely the acquisition of knowledge. *Do not aim at too much.* Mathematics, classics, and theology, are your work for three or four years to come, and I would bend my energies rather upon acquiring these thoroughly than scattering my efforts over a large surface. I well know the discouragement which there is in feeling how little of all that can be known is within our grasp, and the temptation which there is to try a hundred new fields of knowledge. But the man who succeeds in life is, allowing for the proverbial exaggeration, generally the man *unius libri.* Life is very short; and the painter must not hope to be a good seaman; nor is the clergyman to pine because he cannot be the man of literature. I would not be anxious about German at all, but put it resolutely aside till my college career should be over. It can be acquired in after life. Hebrew, Italian, and German I learned after leaving the university, and now that I have them, I do not set much value on them. As to French, if you can conveniently spend some months in the country now, in conjunction with your pursuit of other things, I can see no reason why you should not.

* He had himself spent some months in a French family in Paris while waiting for his commission in the army.

Only, do not be too anxious about these things. It is surprising how little they tell on the great work of life. I am at this moment preparing for a lecture, or lectures, which I am to give on poetry and the poet's character at the Philosophical Institution. It is true it is only the gathering up of ideas that have been in my mind unspoken for years; but I have sighed again and again to feel how much I have to reject as unfit for even an enlightened audience, and in a lecture expressly on the topic, and how many days and years have been spent in acquiring and pondering over thoughts that will never tell in this world, and, perhaps, never will be even communicated. If I were to put what I mean in the shape of advice, derived, too, from experience, I would say this: Take care that the mind does not become too fastidious and refined. It is not a blessing, but a hindrance in the work of life. For a clergyman who has to deal with real beings of flesh and blood, I believe it perfectly possible for too much of a literary turn to mar his usefulness, at the same time that it gives him more keen sensitiveness in perceiving that it is marred. For this reason, if I were in your place, I should be anxious to give to life as much the aspect of reality as possible, which a student's life is apt to keep out of sight. I would read for honours, and sacrifice everything which interfered with this. But in the vacations I would vary this with systematic visiting of the poor, which, more than anything else, brings a man into contact with the actual and the real, and destroys fanciful dreams.

Thank you very much for your warm and kind remarks about myself. I would gladly think them true.

As a contrast to the above letters, so defined in view and expression, and exhibiting a mind settled on a firm foundation of fact and thought, the following letter, full of the ferment of a young man's heart, is interesting,

and especially so in the dearth of all materials out of which a clear conception of his college life can be formed. It suggests more than it says. It makes plain that he *could not* have, at the time when it was written, pursued those plans of study which his matured manhood looked back to as the wisest. It is at once touching and strange to find in it the old passion for arms developing itself in such an impractical and romantic compromise between his destiny and his desire. It shows how near had been his escape from the school of Mr. Newman, which at first had not only allured his tastes, but had also ministered fuel to his passionate instinct for self-sacrifice. In its evangelical fervour may be seen how liable during his youth he was to strong reactions. The almost fierceness with which he speaks against the Tract School is proof *in him* of the strength of the attraction it possessed for him, just as afterwards at Brighton his attacks on Evangelicalism are proof of the strength with which he once held to that form of Christianity, and the force of the reaction with which he abandoned it for ever. Out of these two reactions—when their necessarily ultra tendencies had been mellowed down by time, emerged at last, the clearness and the just balance of principles with which he taught, during 1848 and the following years, at Brighton. He had probed both schools of theological thought to their recesses, and had found them wanting. He spoke of what he knew when he protested against both. He spoke also of what he knew when he publicly recognised the Spirit of all

Good moving in the lives of those whose opinions he believed to be erroneous.

Brazenose, Oxford.

(Clearly 1840: two or three months before he was ordained.)

My dear Father,—I have just received your letter, and take the first opportunity of answering it, as I shall be very much occupied the next few days. Mr. Keary's kind offer* is a very tempting one, as he is a man I should much like to learn from. But for several reasons I believe I must decline it decidedly. In the first place, if I am to be in England, I should prefer being nearer home, unless there were some very decided reason to think so distant a place as Hull my appointed post. But the chief objection which rose in my mind on receiving the offer, was a feeling which I have long had, but never decidedly been called upon before to express. I am willing to look on it as in part merely a sort of romance, which must give way to any sober consideration that might be offered. But I seem this term to have in measure waked out of a long trance, partly caused by my own gross inconsistencies, and partly by the paralysing effects of this Oxford delusion-heresy, for such it is I feel persuaded. And to know it a man must live here, and he will see the promising and ardent men sinking one after another in a deadly torpor, wrapped up in self-contemplation, dead to their Redeemer, and useless to his Church, under the baneful breath of this accursed upas tree. I say accursed, because I believe that St. Paul would use the same language to Oxford as he did to the Galatian Church—'I would they were even cut off which trouble you;' accursed because I believe that the curse of God will fall on it. He has denounced it on the Papal heresy, and He is no respecter of persons, to punish the name and not the reality. May He forgive me if I err, and lead me into all truth. But I do not speak as one who has been in no danger, and therefore

* Of his curacy at Hull.

cannot speak very quietly. It is strange into what ramifications the disbelief of external justification will extend; we *will* make it internal, whether it be by self-mortification, by works of evangelical obedience, or by the sacraments, and that just at the time when we suppose most that we are magnifying the work of our Lord. St. Paul had scarcely reached Corinth, before the Galatians whom he had left behind in a promising state, were 'entangled again with the yoke of bondage,' though they had stood in the liberty wherewith Christ had made them free. But this is rather a long digression, and lest the thread of connection should be broken, I must return before I have come to the conclusion of my digression. I was going to say that after a season of long, utter, and inexpressible darkness, caused principally by my own worldly-mindedness, and not peculiarly enlightened by an examination of the Tract opinions, I have had some weeks of peace which I had never expected to know again, and the desire once more, such as I knew when I first learned the freedom of the gospel, to live to my Master's glory. May He only grant the wish permanence! But connected with this there is a feeling of a marked path; perhaps merely fanciful, yet our desires must be surely some of the means by which God points out our sphere. When I quitted the army, it was with an inward feeling of a connection with it still unbroken, that the step which, if it had been taken at my own instance, would have been a cowardly desertion of an appointed post, was, even under the circumstances in which it did take place, too remarkable to leave me quite at liberty. Somehow or other I still seem to feel the Queen's broad arrow stamped upon me, and that the men whom in my vanity I imagined I wished to benefit in a red coat, I might now with a better founded hope of usefulness, in the more sombre garb of an accredited ambassador of Christ. In short, if it were practicable, I feel a strong desire for a military chaplaincy. But, however, I am not certain that this would form a title for ordination. On this point I should much like to gain infor-

mation—but if not, I should prefer a curacy in a situation which would give me an opportunity for fitting myself for this line.

I have had another battle to fight about my not going up for honours. The new tutor sent for me after an essay which I sent in, and battled with me for half an hour, being in great wrath with ——, who, he said, ought to have shown more interest. And Whitaker Churton was so eloquent on the subject, that my resolution was well nigh broken. But I am persuaded it is best as it is. The translation of Rom. ix. 22, is quite literal. If —— will compare the parallel passage Jer. xviii. from which it seems plain that this was taken, she will see that here as there, the leading idea is God's endurance, and sovereign right of making the clay which was originally a marred vessel, a perfect one; and that it would be a perversion to infer from the expressions 'fitted to destruction,' that they were so fitted by Him. At least, that is my view; but the original is quite as difficult to understand as the translation. The letters I will send the first opportunity, or bring, if I come home.

Best love to my dear little motherette and the young ones.

It remains to notice the circumstances which marked the passing of his degree examination. He did not go up for a class; but his scholarship was so sound, and his knowledge of his subjects so accurate, that on the first day the examiners wrote to his tutor, Mr. Churton, to request that he would induce his pupil to compete for honours. By some mistake, the letter did not reach its destination soon enough, and he finished his examination in ignorance of the desire of the examiners. They then urged him to undergo a fresh examination for a class. He refused, and was given a day to resume his refusal. He again refused, but the examiners,

according to the Oxford custom in such cases, put him into the fourth class.

For some time before his degree, and for a short time afterwards, he read for his ordination examination. Writing to his mother, he says:—

Brazenose: 1840.

I am now reading pretty steadily for ordination, and feel every day more and more the depths of ignorance. I am persuaded that the surest way for a man to be satisfied with his own attainments is to read little; for the more he reads, the more he sees the boundless extent of what there is to be known, and the circumscribed nature of his own attainments. However, perseverance and prayer may do much. I am now reading the early church history with Golightly, which is a very great advantage, as he has a fund of general information, and is a close reader. Jones and I also read together. This plan, if not too exclusively followed, is a very useful one. The conversation which arises on the points of interest strikes, sometimes one, sometimes the other; as you go on, tends to fix the subject more deeply on the mind, and besides gives habits of accuracy. I have had several communications (official) from the Bishop of Winchester, and all at present seems settled for me; but even now, if it be not my fate, I hope I may be prevented going there.

A letter from Mr. Churton, his tutor, to Captain Robertson, gives an account of his studies, and his subjects of thought at this time:—

My chief acquaintance with your son was in the summer of '40 or '41, being together in Oxford, and having then much personal intercourse with him: no letters passed between us, though I can even now recall many interesting conversations. We were all alone; frequently besides our college servants,

there was no one else but he and I within its walls. Many an hour, morning and evening, we paced its quadrangle, in discourse and enquiries as interesting, I believe, to myself, though many years his senior, as to him. The subjects which then came before us, besides others of a more directly religious character, were chiefly the following :—

1. The deference and amount of implicit obedience due to college authorities, even by parties already of age, but subjected to college discipline; and the presumption that our elders are right in such and such injunctions, inasmuch as we may ordinarily assume that years and longer experience ensure greater practical wisdom.

2. The position and foundation of the Tractarian movement, as to how far such views and practices were to be found in, or were sanctioned by, the primitive and early Church; and whether the Church of the first three centuries was a safe and sufficient guide to the leaders and writers of that movement. Hereupon, we not only read together Taylor's *Ancient Christianity*, and verified and compared his passages and quotations from the Fathers, but also read several whole treatises from which his extracts were derived. Besides these points, and others involved in these, I can call to mind many interesting enquiries, critical and practical, as to various texts of Scripture, and many conversations on matters of Christian trial and temptation. I should say that the salient points and features in his character at that period were earnest diligence and eagerness towards the object and end of life; a thirsting enquiry after truth, especially moral and sacred truth; a highly active mind, metaphysical and yet practical; and a devout disposition of heart, opening not only to its own wants but also to the wants of others. I remember in particular his expressing to me his delight in Bishop Andrewes' devotions, as opening before him a new and wide field of both intercessory supplication and individual self-abasement.

During this period he was seeking for a title; and part of a letter to his old friend, Mr. Moncrieff, fitly closes the sketch of his college career:—

Brazenose: May 26, 1840.

My dear Moncrieff,— . . . I am glad to hear that your ministerial labours are begun. May the Lord of the harvest prosper your work, and ripen the sheaves for his floor! I cannot conceive a more exalted joy than the being permitted to see the fruit of our toil in the conversion of the thoughtless to our dear Master. The prospect we have, as far as human eye can judge, is a stormy one, and predicts more controversy than edification. It is impossible to look round on the strange aspect of all things—the Church reeling to her centre with conflicting opinions; in all circles, whether political or religious, minds unsettled and anticipating a crisis; 'men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking for those things which are coming upon earth'—without feeling that our path will be a rugged one, and that the hour of trial is at hand. Do not you think so, even without any excess of foreboding despondency? To me every day brings increasing conviction of it, especially when I see the rapidly developed working of the Tract views, which amount to nothing less than a direct, or, as Hooker would call it, an 'indirect denial of the foundation.' Our motto must be, morning and evening, and converted into a prayer, 'Stand fast, therefore, in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made you free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.' But how strangely that yoke steals round our necks, even when we think we are most entirely free from any idea of self-justification!

Letters from May 1838 *to June* 1840.

I.

Brazenose: May 1838.

I have become quite an owl, staying at home all day, and not moving till the evening. Still I get very little done in the day, though my rapidly approaching little-go examination should make me read hard. Scarcely a word yet have I prepared for it. Not even logic, which is but just begun. Plato is the fascination, and a magnificent fellow he is—not quite so great though as the —— school would make him out. I expect that we shall, in a few years, have him much more studied than he ever has been here yet—Aristotle being all in all. Sewell is giving public lectures on 'The Republic' (which is the work I am reading), contemplating it as an anticipation of the Christian Church! He laboured very hard one day to prove that the study of Plato had always preceded, or been contemporaneous with not only the rise of intellect, but the revival of the Christian religion: another time he said that the esoteric method of Plato was on the same principle as that which influenced the Divine mind to reveal his truths in the Bible in an unconnected form; with several other wonderful discoveries, '*Quæ*,' as the Latin Gr. *poetically* says, '*nunc perscribere longum est.*' My friends tell me I am on the high road to Puseyism, loving Plato, and reading Wordsworth. Μὴ γένοιτο! There is something excessively chilling in the donnishness of Oxford, which insinuates its unlovely spirit everywhere—lecture, chapel, pulpit, union, conversation, retirement—one feels inclined to say, 'Shall I ever love a human being again with anything warmer than a vegetable attachment?' It is just like the contents of my gigantic brown pitcher last winter—though within eighteen inches of the fire all day, one globe of ice. Not very elegant or classical, you will say. Well, then, Medusa's head, rockifying all that comes near it. Churton took me down, about

a fortnight ago, to Ilsley, the rectory of his brother-in-law, where he did duty. The family were away, and we, with two other Oxford men, had the house to ourselves. We all agreed that the distance of eighteen miles had a marvellous effect in unpetrifying us—so much as scarcely to recognise one another. Thanks to God, there are a few spirits of a very different cast here! They must be indeed on fire with a heavenly flame to preserve the warmth they do. Two or three of my most intimate and valuable friends especially. And they will soon see their Master coming to emancipate them from this unintelligible world. If we could but all say, with heart and soul, 'Even so, come, Lord Jesus!'

II.

Brazenose, Oxford: May 23, 1838.

My dear Father,— . . . . I had wished to reply more fully to your two letters for which I am in your debt, both of which, especially the last, gave me much comfort and pleasure. His ways are indeed wonderful—*how* wonderful, eternity alone can show where we shall see the connection of what we are pleased to call trivial events, with His most stupendous schemes, and all that is dark and difficult and melancholy in this unintelligible world, all that gives our presumptuous reasoning hard thoughts of God, all that has grieved and disappointed and misanthropised, will be fully explained, and merged in one unclouded blaze of glory. The time may be much nearer than we expect. The last words of our Lord to his Church, uttered by the feeble lips of his last apostle, greyheaded, and already bending over the tomb, were—'Behold, I come quickly.' I wish we could with our whole heart and soul repeat the answer, 'Even so, come, Lord Jesus.' But we are most of us too devotedly buried in the shadowy nothings of time and space, and too deeply attached to them, to avoid feeling in the very spirit of unbelief, that it is a day whose postponement is to be desired, since *they* will be torn from our grasp for ever. . . . .

I am now endeavouring to read hard, since I have to take or try to take my 'little go' this term, and as I had not a word prepared at the commencement, and have only just begun, it will be rather hard work, especially the logic, agreeable as it is. Plato too, which I am reading in lecture together with other occupations, takes up not a little of my time.

III.

B. N. C.: October 13, 1838.

My dear Davies,—I write in a hurry, and shall, therefore, be concise. On the coach to-day was an infidel, with whom I got into conversation. His views were neological in regard to Scripture, and utilitarian in regard to morals. After much discussion, in which, thank God, I was much helped by books I have been reading lately, he introduced the subject of supernatural appearances. These, he said, could be accounted for on three grounds; but there was a fourth class which cannot be so accounted for, but this we have no right to call supernatural, as we know nothing, and future scientific discoveries might prove it to be quite in the course of nature. I knew what was coming, but determined that he should make the application himself, and begged him to be more explicit. He spoke of ghosts. I told him I had never seen one, and was not particularly interested to prove their existence. After a silence, I told him that if he would not require a Quixotic expedition on behalf of ghosts, he might have an apparent advantage; but fairly avow that he wanted to deny the fact of recorded miracles openly, as a man, we might talk over the question. He seemed ashamed, and said a few words about his not meaning exactly that. The conversation dropped till we got to Oxford, when I suddenly spoke seriously to him. He was affected, and shook hands, saying he would give the world to believe it all; that his father was a religious man, and that his dying wish had been that he should follow his steps. I asked if he had ever asked a blessing on his enquiries,

for he had read much and controversially. He replied that he had, but that it had had as much effect as if he had prayed to a stone. At parting, he asked me earnestly to recommend him any book I could, and he would promise to read it.

IV.

Brazenose: November 4, 1838.

My dearest Brother,—First, I must tell you that you would have had a letter from me in the last packet, but that a party of banditti took upon them to intercept it in its passage through Rodney House, Cheltenham, on the plausible pretext of its being written on thick paper. After I, of all correspondents the worst, had actually summoned resolution to write and despatch a letter, it was very hard to lose the credit of it. I will try to make amends now. Your packet was sent to me yesterday—a delightful surprise. I cannot tell you how I felt, as if with you in your expressions of loneliness and sorrow at our bitter parting. I felt as if I had never loved you till that moment, when we saw the *Sovereign* bearing noiselessly away across the apparently boundless expanse, till she was lost to us for ever in the distance. My poor dear mother, it must be trouble for her to look forward to five years' separation, when one appears to me an age. Such moments remind us with irresistible eloquence that we have no abiding-place of rest here. I wish it were not a mere vain reminding, but a practical lesson, which might lead us to secure another home.

The reading your letters, which seemed fresh from your hand, recalled, with a cold feeling of sadness, the long weary miles of water which separate us, how long God alone knows; perhaps for ever in this world. But let us both pray earnestly that the separation may not be long, and that even in this world we may renew the dearer relationship than that of earthly brotherhood. I am getting now a very delightful

little circle of friends around me at Oxford, and hope soon not to number among my acquaintance one man whose society I could afford to give up. There is one in whom I have been deeply interested; a married man with a family, his wife a very superior woman. He has been reading very hard, hoping to take his degree; but, to my sorrow, failed in his examination—to him a severe trial on many accounts. I called, he was out; but I found her very much overpowered, and suffering intense anxiety for her husband's bitter disappointment. I sat some time, hoping to soothe; his tread was heard at the front door, and the whole woman was changed. I did not hear another sigh, and she calmly and quietly spoke on the subject, and held up a brighter view of it than she herself saw. The hour of weakness was past, and the deep strong current of a woman's affection bore her up. It was the reed rising from the storm when the oak was shattered.

This is a strain of romance almost like the expressions of boyish days, instead of my brown seared tint of three-and-twenty. Alas! how changed the spirit of our dream, our pleasant Pittville walks, only the remembrance of the happy hours we spent there with the ——, &c. But joy's recollections are no longer joys; yet sorrow's memory is sorrow still. Now I wish the thousand leagues that separate us could be traversed as rapidly in body as in fancy; for I should be happily with you this instant. But our only absent one is not forgotten. We do and will remember him in our prayers. God bless you, my dearest brother.

V.

July 1839.

My dear Davies,— . . . . Thank you—most sincerely thank you—for your kind offer and invitation; but I may not accept it. I am endeavouring to make up for the reading which I have lost in the restless and unsettled state of mind of the last year and a half. I confess that every coach which

passes through to Cheltenham gives me an involuntary pang—partly from remorse for misspent hours, partly from thoughts of the future, partly, and not least, from a wish to be at home. But it may not be; and, besides, I wish to have some solitude to calm myself to a contemplation of the rapidly approaching time when, if ever, I must declare that I feel moved by the Spirit of God to be his ambassador. To do this, with all the whirl and throbbings of an unbridled imagination, and worldly feeling rife in my breast, is a thing too horrible to be thought of steadily—*μὴ γένοιτο*! I do not propose remaining in Oxford the whole vacation, though I believe it would be better for myself to do it. Part of the time I intend to pass with a friend, who failed last examination for his pass. It was from deficiency in Latin writing; and it has been so strongly put before me that I might be of some service to him, that I think I shall go over there. Do not, of course, mention this, as it would seem very indelicate if he were to learn the reason which decided me. . . . . I am much interested in your account of the difficulties of Miss ——; but how much better they are for her spiritual life than a smooth and easy path. The Christian's aim is victory, not freedom from attack; and a soldier cannot learn to fight by pondering over maps and plans of campaigns in his barrack-room. It must be on the field of blood, and in the lonely bivouac; without real trial, how soon we find rust upon our arms, and sloth upon our souls, and the paltry difficulties of common life weigh like chains upon us, instead of being brushed away like cobwebs.

VI.

September 1839.

My dear Hatchard,— . . . . Now, then, in a very few words (for I have not really time for more), to express the immediate object of my letter. And yet it is rather hard, for a set epistle of congratulation, like one of condolence, is likely to be very stiff. However, each year as it rolls by seems to

rivet with a more enduring importance a day of anniversary —more especially one of an event which was the ushering into an eternity of either misery or joy a responsible creature. As boys we have looked forward to them, as the occasion of a holiday and juvenile ball. As men, we look back on them, as so many waymarks on which are noted the sins and mercies of successive years. They were seasons of unmingled pleasure —now of self-reproach and melancholy retrospect. Opportunities irreparably suffered to slip by—years of self-indulgence—bad habits formed—friends alienated—others wantonly grieved —in some instances the hour of reparation and reconciliation lost for ever, because they have gone to their long home. Two lines in the frontispiece of a little hymn-book, which I have not seen since five years old, seem branded with letters of fire on my memory:

> Oh! if she would but come again,
> I think I'd vex her so no more!

United with all this, the reflection that we were not only not forwarding the eternal interests of those with whom we were, but actually blocking up for them the entrance to the already narrow path—with all this coming in a torrent on the memory, what can a birthday be to a reflecting being but a season of deep humiliation and abasement before his Creator, his Benefactor, and his Judge? But, blessed be God, these are not his only titles, or there would be nothing for us but the blackness of darkness for ever. I trust and pray that we both may feel and know with respect to the fearful catalogue of past years that He has, as a Redeemer, 'blotted out the handwriting of ordinances which was against us, and taken it out of the way, nailing it to His cross.' If so, your twenty-second birthday cannot but remind you of a closer and loftier union than that which you entered on as to-morrow, a connection with dear but earthly parents; it will tell you of a more real commencement of existence—a

παλιγγενεσία, by which you were permitted to call God your father, Jesus Christ your brother, an innumerable company of angels and the spirits of just men made perfect your society, and Heaven your home. Then as the best wish I can offer you, let me send the concluding verses of the third chapter of Epistle to the Ephesians as a birthday prayer.

VII.

'Brazenose: June 24.'

My dearest Brother,—I sit down to give an hour or two to conversation with you, although so far away; so I shall just let my pen run on, as perhaps it will, without point or connection. It is now the long vacation, yet I am staying up here, within the hoary walls of Brazenose, all alone, partly for the purpose of reading, partly for the sake of gaining the natural tone of mind after a time of great excitement, no less than twenty-five ladies in my room—only conceive. One day we went to Blenheim, a beautiful, but melancholy place; for it is fast going to decay from the neglect of its ruined owner, the Duke of Marlborough. The grounds are magnificent and extensive, the house contains some of the finest pictures in England, especially a Madonna by Carlo Dolci, which alone would afford hours of enjoyment.* There is an indescribable tranquillity, with an unearthly look of rapt contemplation, in the countenance and the whole effect, which makes you feel an involuntary awe; and it is curious to observe how the most talkative groups of visitors, one after another, were stilled into silence before it. In the evening, we went down to the river, it being the last night of the boat-races, in order to see the Brazenose boat come up in triumphal procession, as the head of the river for the year, all the others raising their oars and cheering as we passed. The next day was the commemoration. Honorary degrees were conferred

* This picture is alluded to in his *Lectures on Poetry.*

upon Wordsworth and Herschel, who were immensely cheered: then the prize essays and poems were recited. The next day we all rowed down to Newnham in an eight-oar: the day lovely. Newnham, the seat of the Archbishop of York, is a beautiful place, rendered still more so by the many pic-nic parties, who had gone down, like ourselves, to show the lions to their lady friends, who, with their light dresses, formed a lovely contrast to the green sward and sylvan shade. We came back by night, the plash of our oars keeping regular time to the more musical strains of the Canadian Boat-Song and *La Dame Blanche*, with which the ladies solaced our toil. On Friday they again breakfasted with me—the vice-principal of my college, and nine ladies. My room, decorated with flowers, in silver vases, before each lady an elegant bouquet; and as I was allowed the use of the college plate, the table exhibited a gorgeous display. The rest of our time was spent in seeing Oxford. But, alas! the time came for parting, and a melancholy party we were on the last morning: we had been so entirely together; every one resolved with all their heart to please and be pleased, that we seemed like old friends, instead of which, as in several instances to myself, the brothers of the ladies were not known before. So we shook hands, spoke not a word of sorrow, and I returned to my lonely den, rendered doubly so by the shadowy outline of bright forms and lovely faces, which so lately beamed in it, and still, to fancy, seemed to hover round. I have received the kindest invitations to spend the vacation in different places—Germany, Isle of Wight, Lancashire, London, Cumberland, Malvern, Islay, Monmouth—forcing the grateful conviction that somehow or other, if I am a friend to no one, I have many friends to me.

> I've heard of hearts unkind; kind deeds
> With coldness still returning.
> Alas! the gratitude of man
> Has oftener left me mourning.

That is the genuine, manly feeling of dear old Wordsworth.

CHAPTER II.

Passage from Collegiate to Active Life—Growth of his Christian Faith—Early Sadness of his Heart—Ordination—Curacy at Winchester—First Appearance in the Pulpit—Difficulties of his Work—Letter recalling his Life in Winchester—Success as a Minister—Description of him by a Friend—Spiritual Life—Devotional Reading—Prayer—Preaching—Despondency arising from Illness—Examination for Priest's Orders—Close of Ministerial Life at Winchester—Continental Tour—Geneva and its Parties.

Letters from September 17, 1840, to August 3, 1841.

MR. ROBERTSON passed out of collegiate into active life, out of youth into manhood, with a grave and awful sense of responsibility. His character and Christian principles, though unannealed as yet, had been partially moulded into form, and it is necessary to trace their formation up to this point, if his after-life and more complete developement are to become intelligible.

It was but slowly that his faith, always more intuitive than dependent upon 'evidences,' had become, consciously to himself, a power in his life. Various outward events and influences had assisted in developing its germ into flower and fruit. At Saxmundham, while yet a boy, he had been wonderfully preserved from a

sudden death; and deep gratitude to God was awakened in his heart. There also one of his sisters had died, and her happiness and peace in dying had impressed him strongly. At Bury St. Edmund's, the seclusion in which he had lived had driven him in upon himself, and the form of his solitary thought had been determined by the perusal of Abbott's 'Way to do Good'—a book he valued so highly, that afterwards, at Brighton, when he felt the hardening effect of constant preaching, he reread it, as a healthy incitement to activity. At Paris, whither he went for a few months, after his withdrawal from the law as a profession, his preservation from the 'gross pollution' of that city—a preservation which he calls incomprehensible—increased his faith in the personal watchfulness and love of God. At Cheltenham, he imputes to the preaching of Mr. Boyd and Mr. Close, and to the society of many Christian friends, the fervour as well as the sober resolution for the service of Christ with which he began his college career.

Consistently and actively among the temptations of Oxford, he had lived a Christian life, and grown in Christian experience, and now his realisation of Christ as his Saviour and his personal friend was as deep and vivid as the love and labour which grew out of it into ministerial fruitfulness. This was the cumulative result of many years of prayer and struggle.

To this resting-place God brought him not only through the means of external influences, and of his own thirst after righteousness, but also through the natural drift of his character. In boyhood and youth,

his religion, before it had consciously taken a distinctively Christian form, manifested itself in two ways—as hatred and resistance of evil, and as a reverence and effort for purity. He wrote in after years, and it was true of his whole life—

> There is something of combativeness in me which prevents the whole vigour being drawn out, except when I have an antagonist to deal with, a falsehood to quell, or a wrong to avenge. Never till then does my mind feel quite alive. Could I have chosen my own period of the world to have lived in, and my own type of life, it should be the feudal ages, and the life of a Cid, the redresser of wrongs.

This side of his religion, the old religion of chivalry, made him at school the defender of the oppressed, the bold denouncer of all that was untrue, and the champion of justice among his fellows. There was mingled with this, during his youth, that slight tinge of noble superstition which made at once the strength and the weakness of ancient religious chivalry. In a letter written from Brighton, he relates and comments on an instance of this.

> I remember when a very, very young boy, going out shooting with my father, and praying, as often as the dogs came to a point, that he might kill the bird. As he did not always do this, and as sometimes there would occur false points, my heart got bewildered. I believe I began to doubt sometimes the efficacy of prayer, sometimes the lawfulness of field sports. Once, too, I recollect when I was taken up with nine other boys at school to be unjustly punished, I prayed to escape the shame. The master, previously to flogging all the others, said to me, to the great bewilderment of the whole school—'Little boy, I excuse you; I have particular reasons for it,' and, in

fact, I was never flogged during the three years I was at that school. That incident settled my mind for a long time; only I doubt whether it did me any good, for prayer became a charm. I fancied myself the favourite of the Invisible. I knew that I carried about a talisman unknown to others which would save me from all harm. It did not make me better; it simply gave me security, as the Jew felt safe in being the descendant of Abraham, or went into battle under the protection of the Ark, sinning no less all the time.

The other side of his boyish religion—the adoration of purity—he symbolised for himself in Womanhood. Under this symbol he worshipped, with a boy's unquestioning worship, his Ideal. Like a boy, too, he transferred to the Form all the excellence of the Idea. Recalling afterwards these early days of chivalrous imagination and romance, he writes in one of his letters:—

The beings that floated before me, robed in vestures more delicate than mine, were beings of another order. The thought of one of them becoming mine was not rapture but pain. . . . . At seven years old, woman was a sacred dream, of which I would not talk. Marriage was degradation. I remember being quite angry on hearing it said of a lovely Swede—the loveliest being I ever saw—that she was likely to get married in England. She gave me her hair, lines, books, and I worshipped her only as I should have done a living rainbow, with no further feeling. Yet I was then eighteen, and she was to me for years nothing more than a calm, clear, untroubled fiord of beauty, glassing heaven, deep, deep below, so deep that I never dreamed of an attempt to reach the heaven. So I lived. I may truly say that my heart was like the Rhone as it leaves the Lake of Geneva.

As he grew up he surrounded the conception of woman with all the sacredness of his highest religious aspirations, while his reverence for this conception tended in itself to exalt his desire for holiness of life, and to keep him true to his ideal. In one of his lectures at Brighton, he says—

> It is feelings such as these, call them romantic if you will, which I know, from personal experience, can keep a man all his youth through, before a higher faith has been called into being, from every species of vicious and low indulgence in every shape and every form.

And this youthful chasteness of spirit was never stained in life. It is impossible not to feel that to this he owed his keen insight into moral truth, the lucid power with which he solved spiritual problems and points of heart's casuistry, that clear analysis of apparently conflicting truths, which men said came upon them like a revelation, and the bright and tender sympathy and penetration with which he recognised the good, and by which he recoiled from the evil of the men he met. And now, at his entrance into manhood, both these ideas, which formed, as it were, his natural religion, became, and continued always to be, the foundations of his spiritual religion. He found them realised for him in Christ the perfect Man. His writings teem with glowing descriptions of Christ as the great Vindicator of all wrong; of Christ in his contest with the spirit of the world, of oppression, of hypocrisy. To Christ also as the spotless Purity, he transferred his young belief in the entire stainlessness of womanhood. He saw in

Him not only perfect manhood, but perfect womanhood. One of his ablest sermons, on the Glory of the Virgin Mother,* is devoted to the elaboration of this thought.

The prevailing tone of his mind on entering the ministry was a tone of sadness. This was due partly to his imagination—an imagination so creative that it gave form and colour to every thought, to everything he saw and read, and which, when permitted to roam unchecked, wandered on for hours, thought suggesting thought, and feeling feeling, till a whole wild landscape of ideas and their forms grew up before his eyes. He could not live in so ideal a world in which he became vividly conscious of a fuller life of genius than he could embody, without becoming at times the victim of a vague sadness, the vagueness of which was its greatest pain.

Add to this an extremely sensitive organisation, and it is no wonder that both feeling and thought, in this continual battle between his nature and his will, were, when he was far too young, preternaturally excited, and that he rapidly lost the vigorous health and strength of his boyhood. His spirit consumed his body.

Such an organisation increased, if it did not half create, a religious sadness—the sadness of one whose spiritual ideal was always infinitely beyond his practice. He never was content; he never thought that he had attained, rather that he was lagging far behind in Christian life. Everywhere this is reflected in his

* Vol. ii., Sermons.

letters. His feeling of it was so strong, that it seemed rather to belong to a woman than to a man; and at certain times the resulting depression was so great, that he fell into a morbid hopelessness.

In addition to these sadnesses, he had some real grounds for melancholy. Events had occurred during his college career which had shaken him terribly. He speaks in one of his later letters of a shock received in youth, from which he never altogether recovered; but which, as it was the first, carved its story most deeply into his heart. And yet all his characteristic sadness was balanced by the fulness of life and appreciation of the beautiful which afterwards more fully distinguished him. The result of this was often, joyousness of spirit, an elasticity of heart which enabled him to rebound from sorrow, a power of realising all the happy points of existence, and a delight in all that was fresh and pure in humanity and nature, so keen, so delicate, and so self-forgetful, that, till the terrible pain of the disease which killed him began to torture him day and night, he never lost youthfulness of heart. 'The woof of life is dark,' he says, 'but it is shot with a warp of gold.'

With this character he went up for ordination, and in the very fact of his ordination is partly, also, to be found the cause of the sorrowful sternness with which he began his ministerial work: for it was the final and irrevocable seal set to his self-devoted sacrifice of the profession of the army to that of the church.

On Sunday, July 12, 1840, he was ordained by the

Bishop of Winchester, who, on presenting his papers to him, gave him as his motto the text from which Mr. Nicholson, his future rector, had preached the ordination sermon, 'Endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.' He had himself chosen as his text for the short sermon which the candidates write, 'Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.' 'It was chosen,' he says, 'as peculiarly characteristic of a minister's distinctive mission.' The motto of the Bishop and his own choice of a text, were certainly characteristic of the frame of mind in which he commenced his duties. The enthusiasm which he felt bordered on the stern devotion of Loyola, and had, like his, a soldier's spirit at its root. The trumpet sound of that selected verse may, perhaps, have stirred his heart with an association of the *réveillé* he had so often heard as a boy. It is necessary to say once more, because it is one of the key-notes of his character, that all his life long he was a soldier at heart. Again and again he expresses his conviction that, in a military life, the highest self-sacrifice he was capable of could alone have been accomplished. Those who have heard him speak of battle—battle not as an incident of mere war, but as the realisation of death for a noble cause—will remember how his lips quivered, and his eyes flashed, and his voice trembled with restrained emotion. Unconsciously to himself, the ring of his words, the choice of his expressions, his action even in common circumstances, his view of the Universe and of Humanity, were influenced and coloured

by the ideal he had formed of a soldier's life, by the passionate longing of his youth to enter it, and by the bitterness of the regret with which he surrendered it.

It must not be thought, however, that that bitterness diminished in the least his Christian devotion or his eagerness in Christian work. It was, on the contrary, transmuted into energy for Christ. The strength of character which made him feel so keenly the surrender of one profession, made him adopt another with fervour. He transferred the same spirit of sacrifice with which he would have died for men in battle, to a more hidden and a diviner warfare. His feeling of the solemnity of his duty was profound. One who knew him well says:—

> He took on himself the office of a minister with the keenest sense of responsibility and the most perfect devotion of will. He desired to emulate the spirit of St. Paul. I was not present when he was ordained, but I heard from those who were that his agitation was overpowering. When I saw him the day after, he looked as if he had been through an illness. He seemed quite shattered.

He had been given a title by Mr. Nicholson, rector of the united parishes of St. Maurice, St. Mary Kalendar, and St. Peter Colebrook, Winchester. These parishes had been unfortunate. The predecessor of Mr. Nicholson had been suspended for drunkenness. There were not a hundred people who attended the church. But with Mr. Nicholson's arrival, a new spirit came into the place, and the parish church had been enlarged and rebuilt when Mr. Robertson, July 19, 1840, entered

on his ministerial duties. The impression which his earnestness made is detailed in the following letter from one who was then a teacher in the Sunday school.

I met Mr. Robertson for the first time on the morning of July 19, 1840, in the Sunday school. His bearing on this occasion made such an impression on my mind, that I shall ever vividly remember it. In place of the stiffness and timidity usually observable in the first ministrations of a young clergyman, he fell into his place with the ease and freedom of one who has worn his armour long. I recollect that after Mr. Nicholson had formally introduced him to all the teachers as fellow-labourers, he seated himself on the stool by my side, and after some remarks to myself on the different systems of education, in the course of which he expressed his deep sense of the value of Sunday schools, he leaned forward and addressed my class (about a dozen big, rough boys), urging them, in his own peculiar strain of loving earnestness, to live as Christians, concluding with these words: 'Believe me, there is nothing else worth living for, is there, Mr. ——?' turning to me for confirmation. This was his first address as a minister, and his matter and manner were both equally remarkable.

He preached his first sermon in the evening, on the text, 'Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters,' &c., Isa. lv. 1. He was at once perfectly at home in the pulpit. His sermon, a fervid echo of the prophet's invitation, was not merely *read*, but *preached*, with an eloquence, confidence of power, and self-possession I have never witnessed in any similar instance. On the following Sunday he preached on, 'Thus saith the high and lofty One who inhabiteth eternity,' &c.; and his confidence as a preacher had so increased, that he used considerable action. On the third Sunday he preached on, 'And he brought him to Jesus.' In this sermon he repeated several times as the burden of his discourse, 'he brought his brother to Jesus.' The selection of these three texts for

his first sermons will afford some clue to the prevailing tone of his mind at that time. They were made the occasions for a full and forcible declaration of Evangelical views, though unusually free from the peculiar phraseology of the school which has been so named.

It was not, however, all smooth sailing. There were still, among a very poor population of three to four thousand, much infidelity and immorality—the children of a long neglect. Violent opposition was made to the building of a new church, and still more violent to the establishment of parochial schools, not only by a number of small shopkeepers, who were bitterly prejudiced and ignorant, but also by the old High Church gentry of the parish, who looked upon schools as dangerous innovations.

Among such rough elements did the young minister begin his work. The difficulties of his position were his stimulus. He laboured with all his heart; and especially among the poor and working men, was so earnest, so courteous, so eager to serve, that in a great measure he overcame their prejudices. He was self-devoted, but repelled the praise which named him so.

I would rather be doing my little nothing (he writes to Mr. Davies) in Christ's vineyard, than enjoying the wealth or honour of the country. It is a weary wandering this, but it is a great comfort it will not last long, and there will be an end of battling with a sinful heart, when the resurrection of the Lord is perfected in the resurrection of his members. I have been reading lately 'Brainerd's Life,' which, to my taste, stands alone as a specimen of biography. 'To believe, to suffer, and to love,' was his motto, like that of the early Chris-

tians; but with us, if a minister gives himself a little exertion, a hundred voices flatter him with an anxiety for his life, as if a fireside, plentiful table, and warm clothing were compatible with the idea of suicide. Brainerd did spend himself in his Master's service, and his *was* self-denial—and a self-denial which there was none to witness or admire.

He seems thus from the beginning to have felt the depression arising from the unthankful nature and severity of his work; but he found in his rector a faithful friend, whose sympathy cheered and whose experience guided him. The following letter written to Mrs. Nicholson, on hearing of her husband's death, recalls the writer's life at Winchester:—

Cheltenham, May 26, 1844?

My dear Friend,—I do not hesitate for one moment whether I ought to intrude upon your sadness or not, for we are mourners together. In your most affectionate husband I have lost a friend, and it is my sad privilege to write to you in your bereavement. I was startled and solemnised by hearing who had been taken from us—for I never dreamed that I should be his survivor—and all our happy Sunday evenings, and country walks, and ministerial union, came rushing over my recollection. Oh, what days those were—and what kindness did you both show to me, as a brother and sister and more! After a moment of bitterness, almost the very first thought that rose on my heart was, his work is done, and done well; and I felt roused and invigorated, instead of depressed, by the remembrance that we have a work to do, and the night cometh when no man can work. I cannot look back to all the past without feeling that his memory is a soothing thing to us all, and almost longing that our own course was as fairly run, and all as safe and secure as

it is with him. I preached immediately after I heard the news on 1 John ii. 15, 16, 17, and there was not a little reality and earnestness imparted to what I said from recollecting how powerfully that lesson had just been impressed upon my heart, 'The world passeth away and the lust thereof;' but the next words forced on my mind the feeling that nothing now can quench his immortality. Work done—that lasts, and nothing else, through the wreck of hopes, and the dissolving of this strange universe—'he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.'

What soothing, ennobling recollections yours will be when the first stunning sensation is over! We want such recollections to nerve and brace us for our work. Struggling, battling, conquering, and those that have passed into eternity looking on—the cloud of witnesses. I too have just lost a dear one, and we weep together; but one feeling must be uppermost with us both, that we have deliberately chosen the Cross for our portion, and it is no marvel if some of its blood is sprinkled on us. The Cross is dear, come how and where it will.

And now, my dear Mrs. Nicholson, will you ever come and spend some time with us, and try the kindest welcome of one who revered and loved your departed husband? It will be a joy to us if you will; I do not mean just now, for your wound is perhaps too fresh for that; but whenever you will. Pray let us hear from you as soon as you can write without pain.

The friendship which this letter proves supplied him with the external sympathy he needed to meet the difficulties of his work. His success in conjunction with Mr. Nicholson was as great as he could expect.

We have just had (he writes in November 1840) to open two churches at once, instead of one, in which my rector and myself exchange duties, and they are both crowded, literally to overflowing. We have a lecture in the week, and two

adult classes for men and women, the attendance at which increases weekly, and our communicants have been doubled in the last three months. So that amidst much dislike and disgust from the old High Church gentry of the town, many of the common people hear us gladly, and some of the upper classes are beginning to manifest curiosity and interest. My rector is everything I could wish, as a guide and as a friend. His kindness and that of his wife are unbounded. . . . . Both he and I are occupied at once to the utmost, and cannot spare a day away from the parish.

He devoted much of his time to the Sunday schools, and made the teaching systematic and useful by training the teachers himself. He supplied them with questions on the Epistle for the day, the answers to which they were to work out for themselves. He then went over the results with them during the week. In this way he preserved their power of individual thought—a point on which all through his life he laid the greatest stress. In October 1840, he wrote to a friend as if he were well satisfied with his work :—

With regard to my own work, I trust it is not entirely unblest, though it might well deserve to be so. We have much in this parish to encourage, and I believe the only discouragement is the sloth of my own heart, which too often produces despondency. Still every day convinces me more and more that there is one thing, and but one, on earth worth living for —and that is to do God's work, and gradually grow in conformity to his image by mortification, and self-denial, and prayer. When that is accomplished, the sooner we leave this scene of weary struggle the better, so far as we are ourselves concerned. Till then, welcome battle, conflict, victory !

As a picture of his general way of life, the following

extract from a letter from one of his Winchester friends is interesting :—

When I first knew Mr. Robertson, he was certainly both in appearance and manner the most refined and gentlemanlike young man I had ever seen. His smile and address were winning. He was quite free from any of the *gaucherie* and effeminacy which now and then characterise men of letters. Enthusiastic, and aspiring after impossible perfection, he was grave generally, and a vein of melancholy ran through his character. He could scarcely derive pleasure enough at this time from small and common things. Small pleasures were scarcely pleasures to him. Not much society was offered to him, and he did not wish for it. He was rather too much disposed to regard general society as a waste of time.

His powers of conversation were most remarkable, and so were his acquirements. He was no contemptible scholar, and of general information he had a large store. His knowledge of French and Italian literature were far beyond the common. His power of quotation, especially of poetry, was remarkable. During the first months of his clerical life he was a close student in the mornings, getting up early, and eating almost no breakfast in order to be able to apply himself to his work. He chiefly at that time devoted himself to the study of Hebrew and biblical criticism, though he read all kinds of books. His retentive memory made him a sort of *synopsis criticorum* in his own person. He seemed to know what had been written by most of the great authorities on all difficult texts. His views were entirely 'evangelical,' but even then puzzles suggested themselves. He was always trying to discover wherein lay the difference between 'a saving faith' and a merely historical belief in Christ as the Saviour.

His way of life was most regular and simple. Study all the morning; in the afternoon, hard fagging at visitation of the poor, in the closest and dirtiest streets of Winchester; his

evenings were spent sometimes alone, but very often with his rector.

'' Such was his outward life; but the history, so far as it can be gathered from his papers, of his spiritual life remains to be told. He had entered, as we have seen, upon his ministry partly in sadness and partly under the influence of an ascetic enthusiasm. But he soon met with temptations and hindrances to a severe Christian life which arose from his peculiar temperament. At Winchester he endeavoured to overcome these temptations by austerities. He restricted himself to all but necessary expenses, and spent the rest of his income on the poor. He created a system of restraint in food and sleep. For nearly a year he almost altogether refrained from meat. He compelled himself to rise early. Thus he passed through the domain of the Law, before he entered on the freer region of the Gospel. His motto always was, 'If any man will follow me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily.' But at Winchester self-denial was partially expressed in self-imposed and outward observances; at Brighton, it was the spontaneous and natural expression of his whole inward life.

He refrained also from much society. In some papers which he wrote long afterwards, he speaks of this with approbation.

I am conscious (he says) of having developed my mind and character more truly, and with more fidelity, at Winchester than anywhere. Looking back, I think I perceive reasons for this. First I went out little, and hence perfected what I undertook before fresh impulses started up to destroy the novelty

and interest of the impulse already set in motion. For example, I read Edwards completely and mastered him. The impulse came to its limit, unexhausted.

It will be seen, by contrasting this with his letters, how clearly he saw the mistake he had made by desultoriness at college, and how determinedly he corrected a fault.

He found, he said, devotional reading of great use to him. He read slowly 'The Imitation of Christ;' but, when he could, he chose, as his books of devotion, the lives of 'eminently holy persons, whose tone was not merely uprightness of character and high-mindedness, but communion with God besides.' It made his sense of the reality of religious feeling more acute when he found it embodied in the actions of the men who expressed it. He read daily the lives of Martyn and Brainerd. These books supplied a want in his mind, and gave him impulse. 'I recollect,' he writes at Brighton, 'how much more peaceful my mind used to be when I was in the regular habit of reading daily, with scrupulous adherence to a plan, books of a devotional description.'*

Prayer was his constant resource. In his hours of gloom he would often retire and pray alone till he realised God's presence.

It seems to me now (he writes, in 1841), that I can always see, in uncertainty, the leading of God's hand, after prayer, when everything seems to be made clear and plain before the eyes. In two or three instances I have had evidence of this which I cannot for a moment doubt. You can have little idea of the temptations in the ministry to despond and let the hands hang down; and the many hours of doubt and difficulty

* See Letter LXXII. for the whole subject.

which come upon the soul. And if to these were added the uncertainty, whether the position itself were one in which we had placed ourselves without God's direction, they would be indeed intolerable.

He invariably felt the necessity of forms to support spiritual life, and that all the more, perhaps, from his natural aversion to them. Prayer, always customary with him, had become the habit of his life at Oxford.* He systematised prayer at Winchester. He set apart certain subjects for each day in the week. 'Sunday: Parish; outpouring of the Spirit. Monday: Act of devotion. Tuesday: Spread of the Gospel. Wednes-

* The following prayer was written at Oxford and used at Winchester. It proves the sternness of his opposition to the school of Mr. Newman:—

'The enemy has come in like a flood. We look for Thy promise. Do Thou lift up a standard against him. O Lord, here in Oxford we believe that he is poisoning the streams which are to water Thy Church at their source. Pardon us if we err. Oh, lead us into all truth. But, O our God, if we are not mistaken, if the light which is in us is darkness—how great is that darkness! Lighten our darkness in this university with the pure and glorious light of the Gospel of Christ. Help, Lord, for the faithful are minished from among the children of men. My Father, I am like a child, blown about by every wind of doctrine. How long shall I walk in a vain shadow, and disquiet myself in vain? Let not my inconsistent, selfish conduct be a pretext for blasphemy against Thy saints and persisting in heresy. Hear me, my Lord and Master.'

But as his ministerial experience grew, he began to think less of 'heresy,' Tractarian or otherwise, and to see that it was redemption from sin, and not so much from untrue opinions, which the world required. He writes from Winchester—'I have too much of stern iniquity and hell rampant to grapple with, to give much time to reading or Church questions; indeed, even the Tractarian heresy has vanished from my mind amid the sterner conflict with worldly passions and open atheism; for we have some of these madmen here.'

day: Kingdom of Christ. Thursday: Self-denial. Friday: Special confession. Saturday: Intercession.'

The prayer in which all these centred, the one prayer of his whole life, was that he might have an 'objective, disinterested love of Christ,' and that he might have 'that possession of God which arises from love for others.'

Bring into captivity (he prays) every thought to the obedience of Christ. Take what I cannot give: my heart, body, thoughts, time, abilities, money, health, strength, nights, days, youth, age, and spend them in Thy service, O my crucified Master, Redeemer, God. Oh, let not these be mere words! Whom have I in heaven but Thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire in comparison of Thee. My heart is athirst for God, for the living God. When shall I come and appear before God?

The preaching which resulted from this prayerful spirit was imbued by it. Speaking of sermon-writing, he says:—

The most valuable book I possess is a remembrance of trials at which I repined, but which I now find were sent in answer to my prayer to be made a minister. *Oratio, meditatio, tentatio.* And those sermons in which these have had much share, I have found tell most; and I trust that God will bring in his flock by such a thing as I. I am sure if He does it will be strength made perfect in weakness indeed.

Those who are acquainted with his later career will feel astonished at the contrast it presents to this period. The austerities, the seclusion from society, even the reading of that class of devotional books which rather tend to weaken than to strengthen character, were all put aside at Brighton. The sermons preached in that

town speak continually of the unprofitableness of asceticism, of the necessity of living, as Christ did, among men in the world, and of the dangerous tendency of mere devotional reading. It is plain that if he had lived more naturally at Winchester, he would not only have retained his health, but also given a manlier vigour to his intellect. But trained in a very restricted school of thought and religion which was dominant thirty years ago, he could not emerge from it without first going down into its depths. It seems to have weakened everything that he wrote. His letters of this time are scarcely worth reading. His thoughts are not marked by any individuality. The only thing which did not suffer was his work. The desire to die, partly suggested by ill health, seemed to him to be a spiritual desire. The sensitiveness of his conscience unduly exaggerated every failure into a sin. He fell into a habit of unwise self-dissection. It is painful to read his diary in which all his inward life is mapped out into divisions, his sins and errors labelled, selfishness discovered in all his efforts and resolves, and lists made out of the graces and gifts which he needed especially. It is impossible not to feel, when he got rid of all this, and felt its fruitlessness and its antagonism to the true spirit of the Life of Christ, how he sprang from a dwarf into a giant.

And yet all this self-torture and self-enquiry gave him, to a certain degree, an insight into the hearts of men, though, generally speaking, only into the evil of their hearts. He gained a great command over the

feelings of those who felt themselves oppressed with the same weight of sin and struggle. His sermons touched such men to the quick. They were delivered with great ease and self-command. His beautiful voice, his dignified yet vivid action, and the impassioned earnestness of his manner, made every word tell. In themselves, the sermons preached at Winchester do not exhibit much power. Contrasted with those delivered at Brighton, they are startlingly inferior. They do not, to the *reader*, even foretell his future excellence. They are overloaded with analyses of doctrine. They are weakened by the conventionalities of University theology. They are, however, full of forcible appeals to the consciences of men, and of deeply-felt descriptions of the love of God in Christ.

They contain all the characteristic doctrines against which he afterwards so deliberately protested at Brighton. They contain also many passages which are in reality records of his own spiritual struggles; for in preaching he could not argue abstractedly. He saw things by the light of his own heart, and he preached unconsciously his own pain and his own effort.

I think (writes one of his friends, who *heard* him preach every Sunday at Winchester), that his sermons *did* prophesy of his future excellence. I am disposed to say that they were never at any time more impressive. He then wrote them throughout with great rapidity, always on Saturday, the time between breakfast and one o'clock sufficing for a sermon. He did not use much action, but there was a restrained passion in him which forced people to listen. Though there was much thought in all that he said, yet in those days he had, so to

speak, scarcely begun to think, and of course had come to no conclusions. He had not then thrown off his leading strings.

This friend of his continues :—

About one year of simple life and hard work, during which I think he was really happy, passed. A personal trial then befell him, which he felt very bitterly, and which affected his health and spirits. He thought himself attacked by the malady which had carried off so many of his family, and therefore would have no medical advice, and use no remedies. He imagined that if he once told his feelings, he would be laid aside at once, and he was determined to preach as long as he could stand. This he literally did, and never were his words more telling. He did preach as one who thought himself dying, to dying men. He did not then care to live long, and had a sentimental pleasure in the thought of an early death. He afterwards said so, adding, that he did not then know how much God had for him to learn before he should be fit to die.

The following letters mark the gradual rise of these feelings :—

March 1841.

My work does not prosper as you anticipate—at least it appears at a standstill, and my own energy and heart for the work seem gone for the present. It will not, I trust, be always so ; but after a time I shall be braced up to renewed exertion. . . . . There is much to be learned which cannot be obtained alone—to say nothing of the responsibility of having so many souls intrusted to the charge of a young beginner. Oh, it is a heavy, heavy weight ! I begin to think and tremble as I never did before ; and I *cannot* live to Christ. My heart is detached indeed from earth, but it is not given to Him. All I do is a cross and not a pleasure—a continual struggle against the current: and all I effect is to prevent being

hurried back as rapidly as I might be—but I make no way. I know I shall soon have some heavy blow to startle me from my lethargy. Even so, come, Lord Jesus!

May the Holy Spirit warm you to greater self-denial, and holiness, and love, and devotedness than I can feel or imagine.

Winchester: April 1841.

I trust, my dear J., you will be taught unceasing diligence. If you could but feel those words, 'the night cometh when no man can work,' as you will feel them when it comes, there would be an end of trifling in you, and me, and all of us, for ever. Things now of apparent importance shrink up into nothing in sight of that hour. And there is a work to be done for Christ: how little time to do it in! Surely there is nothing here worth living for, but to be conformed to Him in deed, and word, and thought, and to die really to the world.

Winchester: May 31, 1841.

My ever kind and considerate rector is pressing me much to go home for relaxation, which in all probability I shall do soon. Indeed, I believe I must; for, almost immediately after seeing you at Oxford, I became very unwell, and whatever it may be, it seems to increase instead of diminishing in unfavourable appearance. Periods every now and then of extreme lassitude come on, together with cough and pain in the side. Of course this may be nothing at all; but I write to you in confidence of friendship, that I begin to suspect my life will not be a long one. Not that I think there is any immediate danger, but a very few years would seem to be the utmost limit. I fear I am too earnestly longing to depart; perhaps this has partly contributed to make me form this opinion of myself, and there is a great difference between a desire to be with Christ, and a mere wish to be released from the weariness of the flesh. Which of these two is my feeling, only God knows. Do not mention what I have told you, as it is merely my own surmise. . . . . My dear sister is very ill, though my family seem lately to have become sanguine as to her ultimate

recovery. Oh! if we could only learn that hard lesson, 'Thy will be done!'. To say this in every dispensation, be it what it may, is the whole of religion; for what have we to do but to have our wills entirely merged in that of our Father? and when this is done, we are ripe for the garner.

The medical advice which he at first refused, he was induced at last to seek.

Winchester: June 17, 1841.

I have been for the last week under medical care in town, for cough and pain in the side, and other unpleasant symptoms, arising from inflammation of the mucous membrane of the lungs and bronchial tubes. I am thankful to say that further mischief is arrested for the present; but the medical men insist on my giving up duty for some time. I concealed this from my family as long as it was uncertain, as I told you in confidence; of course it is a secret no longer, especially as it is not so bad as I expected.

Again, on July 5, 1841 he writes:

I have been strongly advised to try a change of scene and air in Switzerland, and I think it will probably end in my following this counsel, though I feel much indisposed towards it. But I must make some effort to escape from this lethargy of body and apathy of mind, and perhaps this will be the only means I can devise. With this exception, I do not think there is now very much the matter with me, only I cannot fix my mind, or interest myself in one single thing on earth. I know it is a morbid state which must be overcome by vigorous effort, but the difficulty is to make it.

Before his departure for the Continent, he passed the examination for priest's orders. He writes from Farnham to Mr. Nicholson:—

Mrs. —— has very kindly offered me letters of introduction to Geneva, which will considerably contribute to fix my plans

of travel, as I shall proceed there at once, with only a delay of a few days at remarkable spots on the Rhine, and then make small excursions from Geneva as my head-quarters. I find a strange contrast in the views of this July and those of last—when all seemed a bright field of conquest before the eyes, and there had been no experience of the painful truth that the professional opposition to others' sin does not release a minister from the struggle with his own. This time, I have had little but shame to feel, bitter shame, and God alone can judge how inadequate to the cause. All this I do not hesitate to say to you, though to others it would be egotistical and indelicate; but I have just been giving vent on paper to the thoughts which rose uppermost, without much considering either order or connection. To-morrow I am to be irrevocably in outward ritual set apart to the work of God. I would that it were as easy to be separated for ever from the earthliness within.*

With this mournful retrospect and sense of failure closed his ministerial life at Winchester. His young experience had passed out of enthusiasm into despondency. Looking back, three months afterwards, from the death-bed of his sister upon that time, he says:—'She is fast wearing away, and her short career will soon be at an end. Three months ago, how I should have envied her calm decay, and longed to share her quiet shroud, and her departure to be with Christ.'

But this sadness was soon remedied by change of scene and the excitement of healthy exercise.

* It was the custom of the Bishop of Winchester to ask the candidates for priest's orders, to write an account of their diaconate. The account given by Mr. Robertson seemed to the Bishop so valuable for its suggestions, teaching, and experience, that he retained it, and frequently gave it to future candidates to read, as a noble expression of the spirit and mode in which a diaconate should be fulfilled.

He travelled on foot through the Continent. He entered at once, and fully, into continental life, and manners, and politics. He endeavoured to see all sides of foreign questions, by conversing with men of all classes.

Nor did he shrink from speaking of religion as it ever presented itself to him as a life in Christ. Few would have dared to have spoken to men as he did on spiritual subjects; few could have so succeeded if they had dared. Even Englishmen do not seem to have been offended. Such was his earnestness and his delicate courtesy, that no one ever drew back in injured dignity. Men were rather induced to open their hearts to him. He had a way of half revealing himself—of giving freely all he could give of himself, while the sacred depths of feeling were undisclosed, which insensibly lured men to unfold themselves in turn. The whole was done unconsciously. He neither knowingly gave nor withheld. He was carried away to say what he did say by the impression which the person he conversed with made upon him. His instinct told him where to stop. Hence arose the wonderful reality of his words, the strange, entire absence of self-consciousness, which gave such a personality to all he said, and such an impalpable force to every action and impression. Old men consulted him; strangers disclosed to him the difficulties of their spiritual and worldly life.

On the other hand, when he met men who despised Christianity, or who, like the Roman Catholics, held to doctrines which he believed untrue, this very enthusiasm

and unconscious excitement swept him sometimes beyond himself. He could not moderate his indignation down to the cool level of ordinary life. Hence he was wanting at this time in the wise tolerance which formed so conspicuous a feature of his maturer manhood. He held to his own views with pertinacity. He believed them to be true; and he almost refused to allow the possibility of the views of others having truth in them also. He was more or less onesided at this period. With the Roman Catholic religion it was war to the death, not in his later mode of warfare, by showing the truth which lay beneath the error, but by denouncing the error. He seems invariably, with the pugnacity of a young man, to have attacked their faith; and the mode in which this was done was startlingly different from that which afterwards he adopted.

With the Neologianism of Germany—to make use of his own term—he also came into contact.

I travelled several days with a young Prussian of Elberfeld. He gave a dreadful picture of Krummacher both as to his life and doctrine, evidently coloured by extreme hatred to religion. Indeed, the account was its own refutation. It was one of the many proofs that we daily meet with, that they who will live godly in Christ Jesus must suffer persecution. He was well informed in English and German history, much inclined to ridicule Scripture and holy things. At last it came to a discussion. He mentioned, as usual, some difficulties in Scripture; and, after a long argument, I told him our hopes, our belief, and our conviction. Direct assertion did partially what discussion had failed to do. He ceased bantering, and after a few minutes' silence, said gravely, '*C'est une belle*

croyance—I would that I could believe it too.' Poor fellow! he was afterwards reinforced by two Swiss of Geneva—one an avowed infidel, the other a blasphemous Socinian. He was unbounded in his mockery of Malan, Merle, &c., whom he called madmen. 'Momiers' is the general popular appellation applied to them. 'They are a new fashioned set,' he said, 'who are tired of old people. They have deserted the old ——' (he meant God the Father), 'and will have nothing to do with any one but His Son.' He walked off on being reminded that the 'new fashioned set' was not these men, but those who had deserted the doctrines of Calvin. So I was left to the fearful libertinism of the infidel, backed, I fear, by the approval, but now silent approval, of my Prussian acquaintance. We parted, I fear, without any good done. I hope to get from Merle or Malan some account of the church here, to-day, or, at least, soon.

From the Rhine, he passed into Switzerland, through the Jura. He had introductions at Geneva, where he continued to stay for some time. He plunged at once and eagerly into the various church and religious questions which then agitated the city. The vigour, the life, the bright enthusiasm which he brought to bear on all subjects, delighted and astonished the circle in which he moved. Friends sprang up around his path. It seemed as if he had become a Genevese, so close was his interest and his sympathy with the despised Christians of Geneva, and the impetuosity and determination of his mode of argument are both characteristic of him at this period.

The following letters and extracts of letters written from Winchester and the Continent, are inserted as containing in themselves a history of his thought,

and feelings, and opinions. One especially, dated Aug. 3, Hôtel de la Couronne, is remarkable for a positive statement of his doctrinal views during the second year of his ministry, and also for the prophecy of Malan, so sternly fulfilled afterwards—'Mon très-cher frère, vous aurez une triste vie, et un triste ministère.'

Letters from September 17, 1840, *to August* 3, 1841.

VIII.

September 17, 1840.

The ministry is not to be entered lightly, nor without much and constant prayer for direction; but if a man's heart be set to glorify his Lord with the best service his feeble mind and body can offer, there can be nothing comparable to the ministry. I have already known some ministerial trials, and I foresee more, much hardness and much disappointment; but I may tell you from experience, that you would take nothing that earth has to offer in exchange for the joy of serving Christ as an accredited ambassador. Your kind hopes expressed for my sister are, I fear, in vain. From the moment that I saw that fatal hectic, which I know too well, I felt assured her hours on earth were numbered. May God give us grace to say from the heart, 'The Lord hath taken away: blessed be the name of the Lord.' I am going to see her as soon as I can.

IX.

Rodney House: October, 1840.

My dearest Duesbery,—My date will show you that I am now at home for a little relaxation, which is very acceptable after continued work. . . . . I am sorry, and yet half glad, to find by your letters that you are still unreconciled to Bermuda. I am glad, because it shows your heart is still at home with us, uncooled by absence, and because it shows

that you are unsatisfied with anything that is to be found below. I think there is something implanted in man's heart, fallen creature as he is, which defies him to be content with anything but God alone. It is a trace of original majesty, which leaves a mark of what he was before the fall. He is always panting for something fresh; and that is no sooner attained, than it palls upon his taste. And this strong necessity of loving something makes a man form idols for himself, which he invests with fancied perfections, and when all these fade away in his grasp, and he finds their unsubstantiality, he must either become a misanthrope or a Christian. When a man has learned to know the infinite love of God in Christ to him, then he discovers something which will not elude his hold, and an affection which will not grow cold; for the comparison of God's long-suffering and repeated pardon, with his own heartless ingratitude, convinces him that it is an unchangeable love. And I hope in God that your disquieted feelings will terminate in this discovery of the fulness of peace purchased by the cross of Christ. All goes on satisfactorily at Winchester, the attention and attendance, I think, gradually deepening and increasing; and I hope many are becoming more and more in earnest about their souls. My treatment I only complain of on the score of exuberant kindness. I live almost at Mr. Nicholson's, and we go on hand and heart together. I had to officiate lately at the funeral of a poor man, for a clergyman who was unable to attend. The burial-ground is on the top of a hill which overlooks Winchester, about half a mile off. I was engaged with my own duty until very late; and night was just closing in as we set off from the church. An old man came and walked by my side; we went along, and engaged in a very interesting conversation. There was something very romantic as the procession slowly wound round the hill—the deep shadows gradually closing in; and it rose to the sublime when we stood at the side of the grave on the top of the

exposed hill. It was nearly dark; and the dark, silent figures closing in around me, with their white hat-bands streaming in the wind, which moaned drearily, gave a solemn and unearthly aspect to the scene, especially when the coffin was lowered down into the grave, only distinguishable by its dark contrast with the snow around. Oxford term has begun. Only fancy! It seems the dream of another life; everything has been so entirely changed in a few months. Gowns, and lectures, and proctors, and all the conventional language and feelings of that august place, will ere long fade from the imagination. No wonder, for the work of reading has been succeeded by a sterner struggle with sin in its loathsome dens of iniquity. However, with a few exceptions, I have been well received in the worst places. It is a heavy thing the weight of souls—hard, up-hill work. Now and then, little things come out by accident which give hope. I heard that a poor woman said every word of one sermon went to her heart, and she thought I was preaching at her. It is necessary to hear these things sometimes, or it would be more than faith could bear. Yet faith would bear it. I again make the resolution to write again soon.

X.

Winchester: November 24, 1840.

My dear Hatchard,—I hasten to answer your letter, which I received on Sunday morning. Most sincerely I congratulate you on your prospect of a curacy, but much more on the approach of the highest earthly honour—the privilege of working for Christ—and welcome you to a participation of its joys and sorrows. Perhaps the latter predominate here, but they are not worthy to be compared to the joys which shall be revealed in us, if we suffer with Him. I think the strictness of self-examination for ministerial fitness is contained in that solemn, searching question of our Lord, thrice repeated, 'Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than

these?' And if we can, from our inmost souls, say as Peter did, 'Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee,' I believe the injunction which follows, and the warning of martyrdom, would be received with equal joy as our Master's will. I am sensible that it is a test that makes me humble; still, notwithstanding backwardness in the work, and much yielding to sloth and self-gratification, instead of sowing in faith without longing to *see* the fruits, I do feel that if the labour, the hard toil in the vineyard, were taken from me, I have nothing left on earth to live for. And I trust that you may have this spirit, less dulled and clouded by earthly motives and low views than it is in me. . . . . J. has not succeeded in his attempt at the fellowship, and I do not know that I am sorry for it, as I believe that it would ruin him altogether to live an Oxford fellow's selfish, dronish life.

XI.

March 4, 1841.

My dear Davies,—. . . . I received the sermons which you so kindly sent me, with much pleasure; that especially on justification seems, under God, calculated to do good. I believe there is at this time a determined attack made by Satan and his instruments to subvert that cardinal doctrine of our best hopes—justification by faith alone; and how far he has already succeeded let many a college in Oxford testify. It is the doctrine which, more than any other, we find our own hearts continually turning aside from and surrendering. Anything but Christ—the Virgin, the Church, the sacraments, a new set of our own resolutions; any or all of these will the heart embrace as a means to holiness or acceptance rather than God's way. You may even persuade men to give up their sins if they may do it without Christ; as teetotalism can witness. And the Apostle's resolution, in spite of all we say, is one which we are again and again making, and yet for ever breaking, to know nothing but Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. . . . .

XII.

May 22, 1841.

My sister seems to grow weaker day by day; and though they seem inclined to flatter themselves that she is better, her extreme languor and continued cough tell a different tale. Alas! there is no home here, and no abiding comfort; and yet I do not know why I should say alas! for it is better to have one tie to earth severed after another till we have nothing left to live for but Christ. What emphatic energy must have been in the feeling of St. Paul when he wrote those words: *τὴν ἐπιθυμίαν ἔχων εἰς τὸ ἀναλῦσαι, καὶ σὺν Χριστῷ εἶναι,* when even we, in the midst of self-indulgence, can yearn for it! I do not wonder at the feelings you express in reading St. Martyn's letters; what a glorious instance he was of what God can make such a thing as man—little less than a seraph burning in one deathless flame of love from the moment when, as he expresses it, the last thing left on earth was taken from him, till the last burning words were traced at Tocat. It is a book that may well be blistered by hot tears of shame. Sometimes one is inclined to fancy that if a path of special usefulness could be pointed out, we might devote ourselves as he did; but I suppose this is only the usual feeling of readiness to bear any cross but that which God has put upon us. I am now reading a book of much devotional and self-denying fervour, Thomas à Kempis' *Imitation of Christ.* I love to feel the oneness of feeling which pervades the sons of God amidst vitally opposed communions. To see such men as Martyn and à Kempis at the right hand of Jesus in His kingdom, will be a joy that might almost compensate for a menial post there as the lowest of the low. . . . .

XIII.

Hôtel de la Couronne, Geneva: August 3, 1841.

My dear Stru,—I have already sent three letters. You come fourth in the family; therefore this is directed to you.

I begin from where I left off. This morning I went to call on M. Malan, without introduction, except that of many mutual acquaintances. I sat talking with him about two hours. The chief subject of discussion was that of assurance. He says that a Christian cannot be without assurance, except sinfully. This I agreed to, though not exactly on the same ground as that on which he puts it. The proof of adoption is a changed heart—2 Cor. v. 17. If a man see this change in himself, it is a proof to him that he has believed, because the work of regeneration is begun—the work which God performs in the heart of all whom He has chosen, conforming them to the image of his Son—Rom. viii. 29. If he does not see this change, it is evidently because of the predominance of sin; and therefore the want of assurance springs from sin. But Malan makes it sin, not indirectly, but directly. His argument, simply stated, is this: Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born to God. You acknowledge that. Is He the Christ? Have you any doubt? You are sure He is? or do you mean to say you do not believe that He is? But if you tell me you do believe that He is, how can you doubt your safety? Would you make God a liar? for He says that 'every one who believes is born of God.' I do not think this satisfactory, because I believe many who never will be saved are convinced of it, and so in a certain sense believe it, as the devils do who tremble, or as Simon did—Acts viii. 13—who was yet in the bond of iniquity. And it is this possibility which can make a Christian doubt his own state even when he says, I believe. Still I admit that want of assurance is the mark of very low attainments in grace: because if sanctification were so bright as to be visible, there would be no doubt. Though a subject on which I have thought much, he gave me many new ideas. I have only mentioned one for the present.

Yesterday I dined with M. ——. They were very attentive, and the conversation on all manner of subjects extremely

interesting, till we came to discuss the advantages of creeds for a Church. He was for admitting all shades of opinion. I represented the object of our Church, to admit all whose opinions differed on subjects not fundamental, and exclude others. But it soon turned out that our views of fundamental questions differed entirely, and I told him we could not consider one who denied the Deity of Christ a Christian. I used this term, because I knew he would admit the 'divinity.' He then told me he did not hold the Deity. I said I could not retract, and must tremble for him. This led to a hot and long discussion. Poor —— misquoted Scripture, and would make no answer to the texts I brought forward. My chief point was to prove the death of Christ not merely a demonstration of God's willingness to pardon, on repentance and obedience, but an actual substitution of suffering; and that salvation is a thing *finished* for those who believe—not a commencement of a state in which salvation may be gained; insisting especially on Heb. x. 14. But to this he would scarcely even listen, and protested against single texts, requiring the general tone of Scripture as the only argument. It would be long to go through it all. He understood fully that the denial of his right to the name of Christian was not necessarily intolerant, but might be even charity.

. . . . . .

I have just returned from another long discussion with Malan, before several persons, which I do not like, because calmness in argument is then always difficult. You think of your own victory instead of the truth. However, I only parried, and allowed him to cross-question me. He does it in the most affectionate and earnest manner; but I could not yield, because I believe all I said based upon God's truth. He said, 'Mon très-cher frère, vous aurez une triste vie et un triste ministère.' It may be so; but present peace is of little consequence. If we sin we must be miserable; but if we be God's own, that misery will not last long; the evidence is lost

only for a time, but I do feel sure it is lost. But God's promise is so clear—'Sin shall not have dominion over you' —that the evidence must become bright again by victory. Misery for sin is better worth having than peace. I love old Malan from my very soul, and hate disputing with him, even though it is the dispute of Christian brothers. Now we must yearn for the day when truth shall not only be, but also be felt to be *one*. . . .

CHAPTER III.

Marriage of Mr. Robertson—Death of his Sister—He takes the Curacy of Christ Church, Cheltenham—Character and Influence of his Preaching—His Despondency and its Causes—His Influence in Society—His Conversation—His daring Character—His Reading—Extracts and Letter throwing Light on his Spiritual Development—Influences which contributed to the change in his Opinions—Progress of this Change—Its Crisis—He Leaves Cheltenham for the Continent.

Letters during his Journey.

MR. ROBERTSON did not travel further than Geneva. He met there, and, after a short acquaintance, married, Helen, third daughter of Sir George William Denys, Bart., of Easton Neston, Northamptonshire. Almost immediately after his marriage he returned to Cheltenham. He was cheered by a farewell visit to Winchester—

Where (he says) many of my old congregation received me with great affection, and I preached to a very crowded church my last sermon. From what I learnt I have reason to believe that more than I had thought were savingly brought to Christ during my ministry there. If this be so, it is more than a requital for a whole life of labour.

For some months, owing to his ill-health, he was forbidden to do any regular duty. During this interval of passiveness, his mind wrought, and forged out some results from his past experience. Even at this period his freedom from party spirit, and his individuality of character began to be recognised. He says, writing in January 1842:—

How much some systematic preparation for the ministry is needed in our Church! We enter it almost without chart or compass; and I suppose the Anglican Church alone exhibits the strange spectacle so common amongst us of a deacon intrusted with the *sole* charge of souls. I hope not to be alone for some years to come, if God should spare me so long. I have preached here several times, and been set down sometimes as a Tractarian, sometimes as an ultra-Calvinist. I trust the accusations neutralise each other, for they are most certainly incompatible. If a man will really endeavour to avoid Popery, either that of Rome or that of a party, and practically hold the real Protestant doctrine of the supremacy of Scripture, I suppose he must be content to come into collision with conventional phraseology, and several received views. Yet it is somewhat hard to unflinchingly incur the suspicion of those whom, on the whole, you believe to be God's people, although it is so easy to keep out of sight what is unpalatable. I am much tempted to it sometimes in the pulpit, and in conversation.

In February of the same year, his sole surviving sister, Emma, died. She had long been lingering into death. He watched her with a brother's affection, and the whole image of her patience crept into 'his study of imagination,' and impressed him with a more solemn sense of duty and eternity. He writes in February:—

Dear, dear girl! you cannot dream the holiness which filled her young mind, increasing daily and rapidly till she departed to be perfect. There had been a subdued calmness about her for years, which made the earnestness with which she sometimes expressed her opinion on vital truths more striking and more lovely. She had left us all behind, far; and when I think of her, I am disgusted with the frivolity and worldliness of my own heart. Is it credible that a man can have known Christ for six years, and believed that there is in store an

inheritance whose very essence is holiness, and yet be still tampering with the seductions, and follies, and passions of this wretched place? I trust this solemn scene may make us all who have witnessed it more in earnest, and more single in heart and purpose. The days are fleeting away, and there is little done for Christ, much for self and sloth. And I sometimes shudder, when I wake, as it were, for a moment, to remember that while we are dallying, the wheels of the chariot of the Judge do not tarry too, but are hurrying on with what will be to some among us fearful rapidity. My dear Hatchard, what need we have to pray for an ever serious, solemn mind, and an unresting sense of the presence of God within and around us! The startling silence in the room where the last of my darling sisters lies, has chilled my heart with a cold feeling of certainty that most of our life and profession is mockery. To serve the Eternal *so*!

Before his sister's death occurred, he had been enquiring for a curacy. He wrote to Mr. Hatchard in January 1842:—

I am grieved to hear your account of yourself. Take care. Depend upon it, you will gain nothing by a press of steam, as I now acknowledge with bitterness: indeed, I do not expect ever to be worth much again. Can you tell me of a curacy which combines diametrically opposed qualities—sufficiency of stipend and easiness of work? By easiness, I mean half services, that is, I cannot take any duty single-handed, but must have either a resident rector, or a stipend sufficient to procure regular assistance. I have had a district church mentioned to me. Such a thing would just suit me.

The curacy of this district church, the incumbent of which was the Rev. Archibald Boyd, now rector of St. James, Paddington, was offered to him and accepted. He entered on his duties in the summer of 1842, and

performed them for nearly five years. The only external events which marked these years of his life were the birth of three children and the death of one.

It was fortunate for him at this time that he had formed a high estimate of his rector. It was all-important for him, in a place like Cheltenham, that a great reverence for another should keep him humble, and that eager emulation after an ideal should prevent him from being carried away by the excitement of mere society.

Writing to Mr. Hatchard in the beginning of his second year at Cheltenham, 1843, he says:—

28 Park Place, Cheltenham: February 9, 1843.

My dear Hatchard,—Many thanks for your kind congratulations, and *long* letter. I feel considerably antiquated by being invested with the honour of paternity, and already experience a sort of foretaste of its cares and responsibilities. I am thankful to say both my dear charges are going on far better than I could have hoped, and I only trust that I may be enabled to realise the promise inseparably annexed to 'training,' for otherwise I should feel indeed a heavy sinking at the prospect of my boy's future career.

I am sorry to read your account of your rector's ill health. What you quote from Bishop Hall is very true in *some* cases. God grant that when we are called our work *may be done.* Poor Grotius' motto lies sometimes heavy at my heart—'*Vitam perdidi operosè nihil agendo.*' You tell me nothing of your work. Mine is far less satisfactory than at Winchester, partly from the superficial nature of this place, in which I would not remain another day but for the sake of my coadjutor and leader; partly from the effect of the temptations and the frittering away of time almost inseparable from a residence here.

Mr. Robertson always preached in the afternoon. He soon began to exercise upon his congregation his pecu-

liar power of fascination. It was the fascination not only of natural gifts of voice, and speech, and manner, but also of intellect warmed into a vivid life by the deepest earnestness. Mr. Dobson, formerly the principal of Cheltenham College, says of him, in a letter to his father: —

I well remember the first sermon I ever heard him preach at Cheltenham. It required little sagacity to discover, even from a single specimen, that he was no ordinary man. Even at this moment I can see him, then in almost youthful beauty, raising his hand above his head as he closed his sermon with the words, 'The banner of the cross, without taking up which,' he said, 'no man could be a Christian.' This generation will not look upon his like again.

Another friend, who has given much information as to his Cheltenham life, writes :—

I had taken a prejudice against him, through no fault of his, when it was my good fortune to hear him preach. At this time he had just become curate to Mr. Boyd. I was not merely struck, but startled by the sermon. The high order of thought, the large and clear conception, the breadth of view, the passion held in leash, the tremulously earnest tone, the utter forgetfulness of self in his subject, and the abundance of the heart out of which the mouth spake, made me feel that here, indeed, was one whom it would be well to miss no opportunity of hearing.

From the first he largely swayed those minds which had any point of contact with his own. In spite of what he says himself of Cheltenham, in its depreciation, he had very many hearers there who knew how to rate him at his proper value, before a larger public had endorsed it. Nor was it among the lay men and women of Cheltenham alone that he made his influence felt. I have been told that at the clerical meetings he attended, he would, for the most part, remain silent, but that

sometimes, when many of his brethren were in difficulty about the meaning of a text, he would startle them by saying a few simple words which shed a flood of new light upon the passage. He never put himself forward on these occasions, but his talents were none the less recognised and held in honour by the foremost of his brother clergymen. For all this admiration, as admiration, he did not care. He could not be contented with anything short of the visible influence of his preaching on the life of men. This is plainly shown in the following letter, which I enclose you.

'My dear ——,—I do not conceal from you that it gave me pleasure to hear that what I said on Sunday had been *felt*, not that it had been *admired*. God knows that is not the thing that would give me joy. If I wanted that, I should write and act very differently from what I do. But it comes, like a gleam of fitful sunshine now and then across a very bewildered path, to find that there are chords from which one can strike harmony, albeit with a rude and unskilful hand. Such things startle and thrill me now and then, as I suppose the strange melody would have done, coming so unexpectedly when the first sunbeams fell on Memnon's statue—for to say the truth, it comes often very heavily upon my heart what is meant by that,—

As it is, I live and die unheard,
With a most voiceless thought, sheathing it as a sword.

Or :—

ἔχθιστη ὀδύνη πολλὰ φρονέοντα μηδένος κρατέειν.

'Yours ever, &c. &c.'

This letter suggests one of the reasons of his great despondency during his stay at Cheltenham — he believed his sermons to be unintelligible. There were some causes for this belief, but they were not peculiar causes. There are always some in every congregation who will depreciate a curate, and contrast him, however

superior, with an incumbent; and there are always others who can understand nothing which is original, whom an argument couched in novel terms bewilders. But common as these things are, they touched this uncommon nature in a special manner. Through the mist which his own sensitiveness and his consequent morbidness created, he saw the misconception of a few magnified into a phantom of failure.

One Sunday (writes the same friend), he had been using all his eloquence to show that this world without religion is a riddle, and that the Christian religion is the only key to it. The next day he received an anonymous letter from one of those lady hearers whom he was wont playfully to call his 'muslin episcopate,' in which he was told that Christianity made all the difficulties he spoke of plain. 'So much,' he said to me, in a tone of bitterness, 'for the good effects that follow from my preaching.' To the end of his life it was the same. He always would look upon the misfortune of want of intellect in others as a fault of his own. That he was not so unintelligible as his fancy deemed even when he had simple, untaught intellects to deal with, is plain from this circumstance, that when he had taken charge of a rural parish in one of his Cheltenham vacations, the church, almost empty when first he came, was rapidly filled by illiterate country-people who showed the same breathless interest in his sermons as the most cultivated hearers to whom he preached at Brighton. On another occasion I well remember, when spending part of a summer holiday with him, how the newly-built church, which stood apart from the village in a park, became more and more frequented every Sunday by goodly farmers and rustic labourers, who listened to him, all eyes and ears, with a pleasant mixture of delight and astonishment. To whatsoever class he spoke, the language of his sympathies made him intelligible.

Owing to his clerical profession he thought himself, at this period at least, debarred from all participation in any of the manlier sports which, by bracing his physical frame, would have counteracted his over-excitable mental temperament. He allowed himself none of the healthful exercises which he so passionately loved, except an occasional walk and ride into the country. The want of these exercises tended to deepen his despondency; but the chief cause of his want of heart was his belief that his work at Cheltenham was a failure.

This melancholy fancy (continues his friend), took more and more possession of him during the latter part of his curacy, but even at the very outset it darkened round him. It was partly created by his extraordinary admiration of his rector. It was a great disadvantage to him that he had to take the afternoon sermon, when an hour before he had been listening to one that his partial judgment perhaps overrated. So difficult was it for him to believe that anything he said was worthy of the place where his incumbent had preached, that during the whole of his Cheltenham career he never seemed at ease in the pulpit, he never did justice to himself, he never spoke with satisfaction to himself. He overshadowed himself by his creation of an ideal which he did not hope even to approach. Another cause of the melancholy fancy I have spoken of was his scrupulosity of conscience. It led him to regard as duties left undone those which others might deem only too well performed. Often in coming home at night he would walk with me for hours, and talk of the little good that he was doing. And when I have tried to comfort him by saying that he was sowing seed which would germinate in the future, and bring forth fruit a hundredfold, he has pointed to the pavement on which we were walking together, and asked 'if I thought he might reap a harvest there?'

'Sad and dispirited' — such is an entry in his diary, 1845 —'from feeling my own utter uselessness and want of aim. Surely man's misery is want of work. I mourn not that I cannot be happy, but that I know not what to do, nor how to do it.' He threw the shadow of these thoughts round Cheltenham itself, and professed in his letters from Brighton that, but for a few friends there, he would never visit it again. In all this he wronged himself, as well as many of his friends. He speaks in later letters from Brighton of the pleasure he felt in finding so many true hearts in Cheltenham. But wherever his morbid fancy as to his own work in life comes into play, he must not be judged out of his own mouth. He arraigns himself, in a letter to a friend, 'for poor unvisited, and duties left undone':—

And yet (says this friend), I recollect his calling on me just before his going abroad, as late as ten o'clock at night, and taking me with him a distance of three miles, through such a storm as Lear was out in, to visit a poor, disconsolate old man, who seemed to have shut himself out from human sympathies, and therefore all the more enlisted his. I never knew one whose care and constant kindness to the poor could compare with his.

In a private diary kept in 1845, there are long lists of poor and sick whom he visited, and accounts of sums paid out of a small income to clear off the debts of struggling workmen; and no man who could write the following letter to one of his early friends could in reality be backward in labour for Christ:—

Cheltenham: November 28, 1843.

My dear Davies,—Your affectionate letter has lain long unanswered. But I was away on a tour on the Continent of some duration when it arrived, and since I have been much engaged in preparing candidates for confirmation. What a solemn charge the ministry is! I feel it more day by day, and my own unfitness for it. Surely a man would almost give it up if he dared. We do things, most of us at least, so badly, so half-heartedly, and self creeps in amidst it all so much, that it all seems one great mass of impurity, which would weigh us down with a sense of intolerable guilt, if it were not that we have something to interpose between our demerits and punishment. It is a privilege to know this. There is nothing but this which can give serenity. At the same time it is a great privilege, too, to know that the Gospel is a system of resources by which we are to become purer and better day by day. It is a grand thing to be a Christian. It is a magnificent hope that we are ever to become partakers of the Divine Nature.

Not only in public but in private was his influence felt. He was cordially welcomed everywhere; but it was in the circle of his own immediate friends that his fascination was most apparent. It had all the character of genius. He was utterly unconscious of it. He never spoke for display; and yet 'I have seen him,' said a friend, 'take a flower, and rivet the attention of his listener with a glittering stream of eloquent and glowing words, which he poured forth without premeditation and almost as a soliloquy.' The spirit he possessed sanctified the influence he gained from these gifts of nature. He clothed them with the graces of a Christian. His daily and hourly life—his little acts as well as his greater—his words in society,

were all regulated, balanced, and checked by his ceaseless remembrance of the life of Christ as the highest life, and by his continual sense of the presence of God. All was done 'ever as in his great Taskmaster's eye.' His graceful courtesies did not merely spring from natural kindness of heart, but were matter with him of Christian duty. In the drawing-room, he would separate himself from those he liked best to converse with, and spend a great part of the evening by the side of the most neglected, sacrificing himself to brighten a dull existence. Perhaps his influence on society was more powerful, as more insensible, than his influence in the pulpit.

Society, in its turn, had a power over him. He easily received impressions. Some of his highest and best thoughts were kindled by sparks which fell from the minds of his friends. His intercourse, even with those inferior to himself, was always fruitful. He took their ideas, which they did not recognise as such, and, as first discoverer, used them as his own; but they were always made more practical and better for the use. Even of thoughts which he received from those to whom they belonged by right of conscious possession he made himself the master. One from whom he borrowed says of him, 'It was not that he appropriated what belonged to others, but that he made it his own by the same tenure as property is first held — by the worth he gave it.' To such a man society was necessary. He needed its impulse, its clash of opinions, and, in some degree, its excitement; and he always

spoke best, wrote best, and acted best, when he was kindled either into combativeness or admiration by the events which stir the heart of humanity.

He was a marvellously bright and eloquent talker. His sermons give no idea of the uninterrupted river of his speech. It had all the variety of a great stream—quick, rushing, and passionate when his wrath was awakened against evil; running in a sparkling glitter for many a mile of conversation, over art, and poetry, and science, and the topics of the day, with power at will to stay its course, and collect itself into a quiet seriousness of waters, again shooting impetuously, yet without a false curve of its glancing water when it got into the gorge and among the rocks of an argument; and flowing with a breadth and depth, a fulness and strength of stream, with a thousand eddies of illustrations and thoughts bubbling out of the opulence of its depths, when it expanded and went statelily forward over a great subject. He conversed, or rather spoke best in the open air. He liked to walk or ride when he talked, that he might put Nature under contribution to illustrate his ideas. Physical exercise gave nerve to his thinking, and health to his views of things. He took deep pleasure in the scenery which surrounded Cheltenham. The aspect of Nature's life, the freshness of summer air, took possession of him, played in his blood, and quickened into excitement all the daring and courage which, at times, transformed him from the clergyman of the nineteenth century into the bright, young knight of the Middle Ages. One day, riding

with his wife and some friends, he put his horse at a lofty hedge. It was a dangerous leap. The horse refused it again and again. His friends, who saw all the hazard, for the ground was hard on the other side, dissuaded him earnestly from another effort. But he could not bear to be conquered; and he did not believe in danger. The horse urged, at last cleared the hedge, but came down with such a crash on the other side, and with his rider under him, that the lookers-on thought both must have sustained serious injury. Robertson got up smiling; but afterwards owned he had been too rash. His courage was always greater than his love of life. It is no wonder, with such a spirit, matched with so chivalrous a heart, that he often thought that he had mistaken his profession, and said to his friends, 'that he would rather lead a forlorn hope, than mount the pulpit stairs.' He believed in his own courage, and honoured it without a shade of vain delight in it. Once, when walking with a friend at Cheltenham, his little boy became frightened from some slight reason. On his friend remarking it, and saying that perhaps the child lacked courage, he turned sharply round and said, 'Courage — want courage! he should never be a son of mine!'

On one occasion (writes a gentleman who knew him well at Cheltenham), he had been asked to preach at a church where the congregation was chiefly composed of those whom Pope describes as passing from 'a youth of frolics to an old age of cards.' I accompanied him, and listened curiously for his text. It was this, 'Love not the world, nor the things of the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in

him.' The sermon was most impressive and eloquent, and bold in its denunciation. Returning home, he asked me if I thought he was right in preaching it. I answered, 'that it was very truthful; but, considering the character of the clergyman whose pulpit he occupied by courtesy, and the character of the congregation, not a discreet sermon. It might have been as truthful without apparently setting both minister and people at defiance.' 'You are quite right, quite right,' he answered; 'but the truth was this: I took two sermons with me into the pulpit, uncertain which to preach; but, just as I had fixed upon the other, something seemed to say to me, "Robertson, you are a craven, you dare not speak here what you believe;" and I immediately pulled out the sermon that you heard, and preached it as you heard it.'

This anecdote, as well as that of the leap, displays more rashness than true courage. He learnt afterwards that far loftier courage which has no necessity to prove its own existence to itself.

During this life at Cheltenham, his intellectual power became rapidly greater, in proportion as his individuality of character increased. As he freed himself from conventional forms of thought, he secured a mental grasp and vigour which he had not at Winchester. He began now to hew out his own path to his convictions. His continuous reading of Carlyle marks the state of intellectual ferment in which he now lived. 'I have gained good and energy from that book,' he says, speaking of 'Past and Present.' He read a great many historical books; and it is curious to find that, in preparing for his class on the books of Samuel, he had not recourse to commentaries, but to

Niebuhr's Rome and Guizot's work on civilisation, and to books on political economy. Tennyson and Dante seem to have been the poets whom he chiefly read, though his reading of this class of literature must have been large, since the lectures on poetry which he delivered at Brighton were first delivered, though not so fully, at Cheltenham. Dante he seems to have read every day, and to have committed the whole of the 'Inferno' to memory during 1845. German metaphysics took up some of his time, and usefully. He had the rare power of extracting out of them what was practical and of rejecting, while his subtle intellect played with pleasurably, their fine woven gossamer of ideas. He still kept up his early interest in scientific pursuits, especially chemistry: and he relieved his leisure with the study of physical geography. He had a useful habit of reading on the questions of the day. When the Maynooth grant was being contested, he made notes of all the debates, and read, in order to form a clear opinion, Burke on the Irish Laws, Lingard, and Hallam. This was his constant practice; and owing to it he was always ready with a well-considered view of all the subjects which had agitated the country during his career.

With regard to his inner life while at Cheltenham, the silent agony and labour of his spirit in much gloom and anxiety, there is little to record. The following extracts not having anything peculiarly private about them, and throwing light upon his spiritual life, are given. One is dated 1843, the other 1845 :—

1843.

Meditation for Prayer.—To plead the glory of God manifested to others in the preservation of his people, and the perpetuating, at the same time, of his fear in their own breasts, as an argument to be used before his throne, that He would conduct me into peace. Joshua iv. 24, viii. 9; Exodus xxxii. 12; Daniel xix. 19; Joel ii. 17.

To ask for love which I have not, as a free gift, that which I cannot force upon myself, see 1 John iv. 8. Communion with God is not to be attained by abstraction and asceticism, but by the development of Christian sympathies. 1 John iv. 12.

Self-denial in Eating.—Motives: my body is the temple of the Holy Ghost. Excess will incapacitate me from glorifying Him; it will produce listlessness, discontent with self, and therefore with others. Hence the Christian graces cannot shine in me. It will give earthly and grovelling views, and cause me to forget my state of pilgrimage. It will be a precedent for fresh indulgence, generally, as well as particularly, in the same temptation. It will prevent reading and meditation, weaken my sense of God's presence, and my own acceptance, by losing the evidence of integrity. It will close my lips in speaking to others of Christ's self-denial. If observed, it will give a handle for reproach, and a right to enemies to accuse me of inconsistency, and give to them a handle to strengthen them in persisting against an unworldly life. It is a paltry trial for a child of glory to fail in. It is a base return for the washing of the blood of Christ. It is a temptation expressly mentioned as unfitting for the *ἀποκαραδοκία* of the second coming of Christ. *προσέχετε δε ἑαυτοῖς, μήποτε βαρυνθῶσιν ὑμῶν αἱ καρδίαι ἐν κραιπάλῃ καὶ μέθῃ καὶ μερίμναις βιωτικαῖς, καὶ αἰφνίδιος ἐφ' ὑμᾶς ἐπιστῇ ἡ ἡμέρα ἐκείνη.*—Luke xxi. 34.

In sleeping, early rising is to commence the day with an act of self-denial, which, as it were, gives the mind a tone for the whole day. It redeems time for early prayer, thereby dedicating the first warm aspirations to God, before the dull, and

deadening, and earthward influences of the world have had time to impair the freshness of early feeling. It gives calmness to the day. Late rising is the prelude to a day in which everything seems to go wrong.

1845.

Resolves.—To try to learn to be thoroughly poor in spirit, meek, and to be ready to be silent when others speak.

To learn from every one.

To try to feel my own insignificance.

To believe in myself, and the powers with which I am intrusted.

To try to make conversation more useful, and therefore to store my mind with facts, yet to be on my guard against a wish to shine.

To try to despise the principle of the day, 'every man his own trumpeter;' and to feel it a degradation to speak of my own doings, as a poor braggart.

To endeavour to get over the adulterous-generation-habit of seeking a sign. I want a loud voice from Heaven to tell me a thing is wrong, whereas a little experience of its results is enough to prove that God is against it. It does not cohere with the everlasting laws of the universe.

To speak less of self, and think less.

To aim at more concentration of thought.

To try to overcome castle-building.

To be systematic in visiting; and to make myself master of some system of questions for ascertaining the state of the poor.

To listen to conscience, instead of, as Pilate did, to intellect.

To try to fix attention on Christ, rather than on the doctrines of Christ.

To preserve inviolable secrecy on all secrets committed to me, especially on any confidential communication of spiritual perplexities.

To take deep interest in the difficulties of others so communicated.

To perform rigorously the examen of conscience.

To try to fix my thoughts in prayer, without distraction.

To contend, one by one, against evil thoughts.

To watch over a growing habit of uncharitable judgment.

The following letter, though immature in thought and weak in expression, bears witness to the delicacy and strength of his sympathy, and mirrors his Christian thought:—

1845.

My dear Mrs. ———,—The sight of your handwriting was a most warm pleasure to me. It brought back old days—days which it would be very strange if I could forget. But I was much saddened by the contents of your note, because its tone, though subdued and calm, evidenced a long, dark struggle with anguish, which has almost been too keen to bear. And, oh! how little we know one another's bitternesses—how little we suspect the hours of secret agony and cold struggle that every earnest, loving heart has to go through in this most unintelligible world! Sometimes it seems to me a marvel how we can ever smile again, so often does life seem to shrivel into a failure and a nothingness. I think I can conceive your trial, and partly imagine that worst feature of all suffering, its incommunicable, lonely sensation. To be where we and those around us are living in two different worlds of feeling, is tenfold more intolerable than to be where a foreign language, not one word of which we understand, is spoken all day long. Those have always seemed to me words from the very brink of the infinite of feeling: 'The heart knoweth its own bitterness, and a stranger intermeddleth not,' &c. I would with all my heart that I could feel for you as I could wish to feel, or even that I could distinctly express such feeling as I have. To

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a certain extent I should have a right to do this, for I know something of what you have lost. A most warm, affectionate, and unselfish friend was taken from *me* when God bereaved you. But I do feel that sympathy from man, in sorrow such as yours, is almost mockery. None can feel it, and, certainly, none can soothe it except the Man Christ Jesus, whose infinite bosom echoes back every throb of yours. To my own heart, that marvellous fact of God enduing Himself with a human soul of sympathy is the most precious, and the one I least could afford to part with of all the invigorating doctrines which everlasting truth contains. That Christ feels *now* what we feel—our risen ascended Lord—and that He can impart to us, in our fearful wrestlings, all the blessedness of His sympathy, is a truth which, to my soul, stands almost without a second. I do pray that, in all its fulness, this may be yours—a truth to rest and live upon.

Next to that stands the deep meaning of the cross, that we are perfected through suffering. What worthy crown can any son of man wear upon this earth, except a crown of thorns? Sore struggle, darkness, loneliness—but with all that the true battle of an earnest soul in its terrible struggle into light and clearness, up to God—that is your portion now. And, oh! may God stand by you, and teach you that a Christian's motto everywhere and always is Victory. I look forward anxiously to seeing you. My wife sends her very kind wishes.

On the whole, these years were years of advance, but every step of the path was over a conquered enemy. It was during this period that the basis of his theological science was entirely changed; his principles of thought attained, but not as yet systematised; his system of interpreting the Bible reduced to order; his whole view of the relation of God to man and man to God slowly built up into a new temple on the ruins of

the old. When he began his ministry at Cheltenham, many common and many peculiar religious experiences; many elements of belief conquered out of doubt; many elements of doubt itself, enthusiasms, speculations, memories of strange feelings, and secret feelings, which led him into either too poetical or too despairing a view of life, were, as it were, floating in solution. When his ministry at Oxford began, his character and his principles were fixed for life.

The outward influences which most contributed to his developement were the friendships he formed, and the circumstances of his ministry at Cheltenham. The warmth of his affections made him take the highest view of the duties of friendship. Even while he was proclaiming in his letters something like misanthropy and indifference to his friends, he was always ready to spend everything in their service. His heart conquered easily, and in a moment, his philosophy. The chivalry of his nature made him believe all things of those he loved. 'I recollect almost irritating him once,' said a gentleman, 'because I maintained with regard to a friend that his moral qualities outshone his intellectual.' Hence his affection sometimes vitiated his judgment, and he idealised his friends into a perfection which often did not belong to them. One result of this was that when a friend failed him, and his idol fell from its pedestal, the shock almost broke his heart. Another, and the most important, was that the greatest changes in his life and modes of thought were wrought in a large degree through

the influence of his friends. Not that he was ever a passive instrument on which they played, but that the chords they struck made him conscious of the music in himself: their sympathy drew him out, and sometimes quickened his whole nature into an almost preternatural activity of thought and feeling, during which any swift reflection or quick return of his own or a cognate thought, even any deep interest on the part of another, kindled so intense a fire of creative force that his words seemed to pour forth red-hot with the rapidity and earnestness of an imagination which gathered fresh fuel from its own consumption.

Above all, he needed the sympathy, the reciprocity of thought, the consciousness of being understood, which a true and deep friendship gives. And yet this was the man who afterwards, at Brighton, was driven into the deepest solitariness of heart; whom God saw right to separate from all, and to surround with slander and misunderstanding, that he might learn to 'stand alone, in the strength of manlier independence;' that, divided from human sympathy, like his master, Christ, he might be able to enter into and to teach as none else have done so well in this generation, the character of the human life of the Saviour. It is a truth always new from its strangeness—that the prophet must be a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; despised and rejected of men: that the consoler must be one who feels all that is human keenly, but who is unfelt for himself by men.

He had boyish friendships, which he characterised as

'full of sudden impulses; of impetuous, passionate attachment; of protestations, vows of constancy, prodigality of promises.' The friendship of the years of manhood he defines 'as not mere intimacy, but as exclusive, personal regard, mingled with reciprocity of feeling; as founded on the communion of like with like, or of unlike with unlike;' and a passage in one of his unpublished sermons at once gives the depth with which he felt, and the opinion which he held with regard to the origin of a friendship:—

Hearts are linked to hearts by God. The friend on whose fidelity you count, whose success in life flushes your cheek with honest satisfaction, whose triumphant career you have traced and read with a heart throbbing almost as if it were a thing alive, for whose honour you would answer as for your own; that friend given to you by circumstances over which you had no control, was God's own gift.

One of these friends was, for a time, Mr. Boyd. The admiration which he expresses for his rector in his earlier letters from Cheltenham rapidly passed into an affection which was rendered delicate by a veneration almost childlike. Indeed, there was nothing more beautiful in his nature than the innocent faith which always sought for and believed in the nobility of others. He saw his friends through the atmosphere of his own love and truthfulness, and when, as sometimes happened, he was against his will, convinced that what he saw was partially at least an air-built castle, the beauty of which was his own creation, the blow fell heavily and sorely on his heart. The influence of this friendship

was at this time, however, clearly marked. It bore fruit in his sermons. Under the impulse given by those of Mr. Boyd, they became entirely changed in character. Instead of writing them in one morning, without preparation, as he did at Winchester, he studied for them on Thursday and Friday, and wrote them carefully on Saturday. They were no longer so much disquisitions on doctrine or mere impassioned descriptions of the love of God in Christ. Their tone was more intellectual, without being less earnest; their generalisations more daring, and their practical teaching wider. Especially he learnt to enter into the more minute and subtler phases of Christian life. Through the ideal which friendship created, much of his peculiar *intellectual* power in preaching was drawn to the light. It is true at this time his ideal was not very high. He himself excelled it, and he afterwards changed his opinion of those sermons which then stirred him into mental activity.

The other friendship which influenced him largely was formed with a gentleman deeply read in metaphysics, and well acquainted with the results of the sudden outburst in this century of theological and philosophical excitement in Germany. He had faced as subjects of intellectual enquiry those questions which Robertson had faced as subjects of personal spiritual experience. Both desired, with a most single purpose, truth, as the end of their speculations. Their conversations were frequent and interesting, and it was partially, at least, due to this friendship that Mr. Robertson

escaped from the trammels which had confined his intellect and his spirit.

The circumstances which, independent of friendship, most tended to change his theological views, and his principles of spiritual thought, were connected with the state of religious feeling in Cheltenham. The controversy of the 'Tracts for the Times' was at its height when he entered on his curacy. The town was a hotbed of religious excitement. There were the usual tests of orthodoxy applied to every new clergyman, and the usual ban placed on those who could not repeat their Shibboleth. Popular preachers were adopted as leaders of party; and to hold certain doctrines, and to speak certain phrases, and to feel certain feelings, was counted equivalent to a Christian life by many among their congregations. This is common enough, and Mr. Robertson came into contact with it at Brighton as well as at Cheltenham. But coming from Winchester, where there was little or none of this popular religion, and where his work lay among the poor, who do not make so great a parade of their spiritual life, he was shocked by the contrast. At first, with his unquestioning charity, he believed that all who spoke of Christ were Christlike. But he was rudely undeceived. His truthful character, his earnestness, at first unconsciously, and afterwards consciously, recoiled from all the unreality around him. He was so pained by the expressions of religious emotion which fell from those who were living a merely fashionable life, that he states himself, in one of his letters, that he gave up reading

all books of a devotional character, lest he should be lured into the same habit of feeling without acting. His conception, also, of Christianity as the religion of just and loving tolerance, and of Christ as the king of men through the power of meekness, made him draw back with horror from the violent and blind denunciation which the 'religious' agitators and the 'religious' papers of the extreme portion of the Evangelical party indulged in under the cloak of Christianity. 'They tell lies,' he said, 'in the name of God; others tell them in the name of the devil: that is the only difference.'

It was this, and other things of the same kind, which first shook his faith in Evangelicalism. He was an upright, faithful follower of that school at college and Winchester, and, strange to say, a rigid Sabbatarian. The following letters mark the point of view he occupied when he had been a year at Cheltenham:—

I quite agree with you about the Calvinistic doctrines. I think we ought to preach them in the proportion in which they are found in Scripture, connected always with election unto holiness. The fact is, we have one thing, and only one, to do here on earth—to win the character of heaven before we die. This is practical, and simple to understand. We cannot do it alone; but the Spirit's agency is given us under our present dispensation to mould us by his influences into the image of God. And with this great truth, what madness it is to spend our time in speculating about our election! I preach it, I trust, uncompromisingly and unmistakably; but as a topic of preaching, I desire to make it very subordinate to the end towards which it converges, the restoration of sinners to the heavenly purity which they have lost.

Cheltenham: January 10, 1843.

It seems to me that at the Reformation, and, subsequently, the error of stickling about non-essentials, was shared equally by both sides. If the High Church party were unpardonable for making them a matter of life and death, the Puritans were surely not blameless in dividing the Church upon such matters. It may be very true that, like the schoolboy who lived 'once upon a time,' they refused to say A, because they knew that they would next be compelled to say B, but still it would have been better to have waited for this, and made the stand on a vital point instead of a ridiculous one. . . . . I think the *principle* is an important one at this crisis, however the application may be dubious in detail. We need to walk warily and circumspectly, 'giving no occasion.' Offence there will be soon, because our principles cannot amalgamate by any device—not even a second edition of No. 90—with the Tractarians it is *bellum internecinum*. But I would reserve the contest till principle is at stake; and until it comes to genuflections at the altar, I think there is scarcely any external matter that might not be complied with. I wish we were together. You ask after my plans. I have none, but am just waiting till my path is pointed out. I fear there is no chance of my remaining here. My life has been so full of changes, that I scarcely look at anything now as if it were permanent; perhaps I have too much of this feeling; for it prevents my forming plans till the opportunity is past.

1843.

. . . . Now for your questions. I think Dr. Pusey's doctrine on the Eucharist just as dangerous, but much more incredible, than transubstantiation. I think the Vice-Chancellor might have given him an opportunity of recanting, but I am very glad he did not, for it would have only prolonged a useless controversy. As to the Church of England, I am hers, *ex animo*. I do not mean to say that if I had written her baptismal service, I should have exactly expressed myself as

she has done; but take her as she is, 'With all thy faults, I love thee still.' As to the state of the Evangelical clergy, I think it lamentable. I see sentiment instead of principle, and a miserable, mawkish religion superseding a state which once was healthy. Their adherents I love less than themselves, for they are but the copies of their faults in a larger edition. Like yourself, I stand nearly alone, a theological Ishmael. The Tractarians despise me, and the Evangelicals somewhat loudly express their doubts of me.

These letters were written in 1843. In the following years doubts and questionings began to stir in his mind. He could not get rid of them. They were forced upon him by his reading and his intercourse with men. They grew and tortured him. His teaching in the pulpit altered, and it became painful to him to preach. He was reckoned of the Evangelical school, and he began to feel that his position was becoming a false one. He felt the excellence, earnestness, and gladly recognised the work of the nobler portion of that party; but he felt also that he must separate from it. In his strong reaction from its extreme tendencies, he understood with a shock, which upturned his whole inward life for a time, that the system on which he had founded his whole faith and work could never be received by him again. Within its pale, for him, there was henceforward neither life, peace, nor reality. It was not, however, till almost the end of his ministry at Cheltenham that this became clearly manifest to him. It had been slowly growing into a conviction. An outward blow—the sudden ruin of a friendship which he had wrought, as he imagined, for ever, into his being—

a blow from which he never afterwards wholly recovered—accelerated the inward crisis, and the result was a period of spiritual agony so awful that it not only shook his health to its centre, but smote his spirit down into so profound a darkness, that of all his early faiths but one remained: 'It must be right to do right.' He had passed up the hill Difficulty with youthful ardour; he had been glad in the Beautiful house, and seen the Delectable mountains from far; he had gone down the hill with enthusiasm and pleasant thoughts; but Apollyon met him in the valley, and broken by the battle, but unsubdued, he walked in tenfold gloom through the valley of the Shadow of Death, with the fiends whispering dark doubts in his ears, till he half believed them to be his own—stumbling and fainting, but ever going onwards—till at last emerging victorious he went up upon the hills to see with clearer vision than before through the glass of faith the shining of the Celestial City. This is no mere fanciful parallel. Abstracting some passages evidently put in to suit the especial subject on which he spoke, and those to whom he spoke, the following extract from his lecture to working men, delivered at Brighton, is a description of his own experience at this period, when, leaving Cheltenham, he wandered alone through the Tyrol:—

It is an awful moment when the soul begins to find that the props on which it has blindly rested so long are, many of them, rotten, and begins to suspect them all; when it begins to feel the nothingness of many of the traditionary opinions which

have been received with implicit confidence, and in that horrible insecurity begins also to doubt whether there be anything to believe at all. It is an awful hour—let him who has passed through it say how awful—when this life has lost its meaning, and seems shrivelled into a span; when the grave appears to be the end of all, human goodness nothing but a name, and the sky above this universe a dead expanse, black with the void from which God himself has disappeared. In that fearful loneliness of spirit, when those who should have been his friends and counsellors only frown upon his misgivings, and profanely bid him stifle doubts, which for aught he knows may arise from the fountain of truth itself; to extinguish, as a glare from hell, that which for aught he knows may be light from heaven, and everything seemed wrapped in hideous uncertainty, I know but one way in which a man may come forth from his agony scathless; it is by holding fast to those things which are certain still—the grand, simple landmarks of morality. In the darkest hour through which a human soul can pass, whatever else is doubtful, this at least is certain. If there be no God, and no future state, yet, even then, it is better to be generous than selfish, better to be chaste than licentious, better to be true than false, better to be brave than to be a coward. Blessed beyond all earthly blessedness is the man who, in the tempestuous darkness of the soul, has dared to hold fast to these venerable landmarks. Thrice blessed is he who—when all is drear and cheerless within and without, when his teachers terrify him, and his friends shrink from him—has obstinately clung to moral good. Thrice blessed, because *his* night shall pass into clear, bright day.

I appeal to the recollection of any man who has passed through that hour of agony, and stood upon the rock at last, the surges stilled below him, and the last cloud drifted from the sky above, with a faith, and hope, and trust no longer traditional, but of his own—a trust which neither earth nor hell shall shake thenceforth for ever.

The friend to whom alone he confided his mental difficulties has given the following account. After stating that Mr. Robertson belonged to the Evangelical party, he proceeds: —

He was led to reconsider his views. But the reopening of any vital question was, in his case, attended with infinite pain. His liberality was so great that he allowed every question to remain open for a time; his earnestness was so great that he brought his best judgment to bear upon it, and very soon arrived at a conclusion. Then he considered the question closed. He would not suffer its ghost to haunt him. When he was forced, therefore, to reconsider a subject of great religious importance, he was deeply distressed. The examination of particular points of belief involved him in the examination of a great deal more. When the rains descended, and the floods came, and the wind beat upon his house, he must needs go down and look at its foundation. He suffered severely during the latter part of his stay at Cheltenham. He did not willingly say much to me; but there was something which he could not hide from a friend, which allowed him no rest for the sole of his foot. His health so suffered that I urged the necessity of giving up his curacy, and advised him to go abroad. I accompanied him as far as Liege, where we parted, and he pursued his way to the Tyrol.

At Ostend and Brussels he fell in with old friends, who seemed to cheer him, but the real state of his mind at this period may best be gathered from two letters written to me from the Tyrol and from Heidelberg. I have thought it right to send you these letters, because while I would jealously guard his memory, it does not seem to me wise to let the public have half-views of him, or think that anything is kept back which may help them to form a true estimate of the man. Their publication will do him no harm, and may do the truth-

seeking part of the world much good. Any false impression they may create will be corrected by himself in the letters of his later life.

During his stay at Heidelberg he plunged deeply into German metaphysics and theology. So the holiday which should have been given to health, was given to the solution of those hard problems, by the consideration of which his health had been undermined. It is no wonder that, labouring thus night and day, he returned to Cheltenham less physically improved than his friends had hoped for, though calmer and more composed in mind. His soul had been stirred to its very depths, and had not yet had time to settle. The wine did not yet run clearly. He did not seek for sympathy. He was accustomed, as he said, to consume his own smoke. But he could not do this so entirely that his friends could not guess what was going on within. One of these, I recollect, who was with him at the English Lakes, said to him one day with some sharpness, pointing to the summit of Skiddaw, which was unseen the while for mist, 'I would not have my head, like the peak of that mountain, involved, as we see it now, in cloud, for all that you could offer me.' 'I would,' rejoined Robertson, quickly, 'for, by-and-by, the cloud and mist will roll away, and the sun will come down upon it in all his glory.'

He started for the Continent in September 1846.

The interesting letters which follow reveal clearly his state of mind. They are very, even passionately, morbid in their view of life; but morbid thoughts necessarily accompany a struggle for spiritual existence. He was emerging from this gloom into clearer light, when he arrived at Heidelberg. There he took the pulpit for the English chaplain, and so deeply interested many of the men who heard him, that his six weeks' stay in

this place led to a large correspondence afterwards; especially on the part of some Unitarians, who, struck by his tolerance and his consistent support of the great doctrine of the Church of England, wished to hear more from him on the subject of their controversy.

XIV.

Cortona: September 24, 1846.

My dear ———,—I have a spare hour, and I cannot better employ it than by giving you a sketch of my proceedings. I shall pass over all till the time when I got to Innsbruck, where I arrived about five o'clock one glorious afternoon. It lies in a valley about two miles broad, and extending in length as far as the eye can reach. In the centre of this runs, or rather gushes, the Inn, on its way down to the Danube. From the heights above, about four hours before you reach Innsbruck, is a view which, in its way, I never saw equalled. A lovely plain studded with spires and villages, with none of the disadvantages of a plain, such, for instance, as is the plain of Gloucester, seen from Malvern, flat and wearisome. The background to this plain rises gigantic and abrupt, a long line of mountains, some of which, when I passed, were covered with recently fallen snow. Filled with all the disagreeable associations which belong to a twenty-six hours' drive in a dirty diligence, I cannot describe the revulsion of feeling which is experienced when this splendour breaks upon you, lighted up by the brilliancy of a sunny day. It shone everywhere, except on my heart. That night I wandered alone by the rush of the Inn, and gave myself up unreservedly to the spirit of the place. I love to do this always. I try to

arrive at a place where I sleep in good time, that I may get my stroll, after I am quite refreshed, before the sun has set. Such a one I got last night at Brunecken, and such a one I got three years ago at the Grimsel, when I left my brothers in the Hospice and strolled out alone. That evening almost stands alone in my life. I shall never have such another—so solemn, so awful, so almost holy. That wild, savage scenery, made more wild by storm-clouds which were just beginning to drift over the peaks above me, conveyed sensations which come only once in life. They say love comes only once. That is a sickly school-girl's fancy; but I do think nature, in all its mystery, is felt but once. Yesterday, and at Innsbruck, my feelings were not like those—not so sweet, not so happy. The sensation was one of *laissez aller*. Clouds were there, and rich purple and blackening mountains, and coming night—and my feeling was a kind of indifference which is not indifference. It was all drifting on—clouds, life, time, and I cared not how fast I drift along with it. Crumbling mountains, valleys strewed with rocks and ruin, and all this shrouding itself fast in deepening darkness. I came back to another world of feeling—lighted streets, people crowding out from vespers, noise, hurry, and uproar. Two things in Innsbruck pleased me much: the Hofkirche, in which is Hofer's monument, and two singular lines of gigantic bronze figures, besides the finest tomb in Europe—Maximilian's—and the museum. In the latter is a complete collection of everything in the Tyrol—birds, vegetables, minerals, works of art, sculpture, and paintings by Tyrolese artists; and one compartment, as interesting as all the rest together, where lie Hofer's and Spechbacher's swords; some of the money coined when Hofer was governor of the Tyrol, his girdle, braces, sash, and a letter written for supplies. I drew his sword, and almost felt that it was done with a soldier's feeling.

Botzen: September 27.

I have been unable to finish this, from the impossibility of procuring legible ink in the mountain places where I have been the last few days. When at Innsbruck, I tried to get a shot at a chamois, and for this purpose engaged a jäger. We walked out one day to a distant place in the hills, where we slept. Next morning, at a little after four, the stars still shining brightly, and the sky like midnight, we set off, and saw the sun rise gloriously an hour and a half afterwards. We climbed on and on for hours, watching the clouds curling beneath us and wreathing themselves in fantastic forms, as if the morning light were torturing them—on and on, through pine forest, and heath, and rocks, till at three o'clock we had reached our highest altitude; but not even the trace of a chamois did we see. By nine at night I got back, ravenously hungry, and prepared to make up for the sleepless hours of the preceding night; but I was well repaid by glorious views —which few Englishmen can have seen—of the valleys of the Stubay, and Sill, and Inn, lying far beneath us. The night before was a strange and painful one. I could not sleep. My companion had taken leave of me with the usual respectful salutation, after supping on trout and sour wine together, side by side—turning down my bed to see if the sheets were clean, &c., and all those traits of respectful independence which mark the lower orders here. For some hours, excitement kept me awake—excitement from the scenery I had just passed through, and the anticipations of the morrow to which I looked forward. That passed away, and still I could not sleep. Lassitude of heart came on—a strange, melancholy sinking of the spirit. Life rose before me like a thin shadow. I felt that past years had been one vast failure, and I looked on to future ones with a heart utterly adrift, wishing to be wiser than heretofore, practically wiser, but not knowing how. I was wide awake when the jäger came to summon me. Night after night

has been like this—restless, whether I sleep or wake; and at five regularly I throw myself out in the dark to drive away the spectres. Take one single night as a specimen—the night before last. I dreamed that some one was telling me that all my friends were mourning over the deterioration of my sermons, &c.—their unintelligibility and emptiness. I woke, went to sleep again, and then was arraigned for duties left undone—sick unvisited, schools untaught, &c., with a minuteness of detail—names I never heard of, &c.—all of which it would be childish to record. I only tell you my dreams, to show you the unresting, unaltering state of my heart. Change of scene, hard exercise, conversation with foreigners; all make no difference. But enough of this.

I set out on Monday last from Innsbruck with my knapsack, and walked across the Brenner, up the valley of the Sill, down the valley of the Eisach, turned off at Mittenwald, passed along the valley of the Rienz, threaded the pass of Ampezzo, and in three days and a half arrived at Cortona, within twenty-four hours of Venice. The pass of Ampezzo is glorious. The road winds through serrated and striking mountains, in one place under a glacier. It was a beautiful day when I passed, and I had the full enjoyment of it—at least the first half. After that, rain fell in torrents, and by the time I got to Cortona, I was drenched. But even this, I think, only enhanced the grandeur. Gleams from time to time revealed the more distant peaks, and the clouds curling curiously and wildly round the nearer ones, only made the thing more sublime. . . . Yesterday from a place called Castleruth, beautifully perched upon an eminence commanding views in every direction, and directly under one of the finest of the grand dolomite crags, I began to descend a most steep mountain down to Botzen. It was the hardest part of the whole walk—blistered me severely, wrung my ankle by a slip—but winds through scenery of enchanting beauty, till, at the foot, it leads by a single wooden arch thrown high across the Eisach into

the road towards Botzen, twelve miles above it—the same road which I had quitted when I turned off at Mittenwald to the Passier Thal. Southern scenery was now making its appearance. Luxuriant trellised vines, pumpkins lying rich and yellow on the ground, a more genial and almost sultry air told that the land of sunny skies was not far off. Botzen, more south than which I do not go, lies at the junction of two valleys, the vale of the Eisach and that of the Adige, and is surrounded by hills which overhang the town; vines and fig-trees, mulberries, pumpkins, &c., clothe their sides. To-day I met an English physician at table, who has lived twenty-five years in Bohemia—looks German, speaks English with hesitation—and from him I have got a good deal of information respecting the Tyrol and German authors. He says Jean Paul is despised—has no claim to the title of a thinker; that the first Germans look down on all the metaphysical school; and that the metaphysicians, almost to a man, are defective in character.

XV.

Hôtel du Prince Charles, Heidelberg: October 24, 1846.

My dear ———,—Thank you for your affectionate and kind letter which I received this morning, and which I hasten at once to answer. Yet I scarcely know how to answer it. I would not willingly conceal any part of my heart from you, yet I fear I could not intelligibly tell you all, though I can put it in very distinct English for myself. At least, set your mind at rest on one point. Whatever mental trials I may experience, you are not responsible for any. I have heard you state difficulties, but never argue for them; and the difficulties could not come upon my mind for the first time—of a man who had read theological and philosophical controversy—long before, with painful interest—a man, who, at different times, has lived in the atmosphere of thought, in which Jonathan Edwards, Plato, Lucretius, Thomas Brown, Carlyle, Emerson,

and Fichte lived—who has steeped his soul and memory in Byron's strong feelings—who has walked with Newman years ago to the brink of an awful precipice, and chosen rather to look upon it calmly, and know the worst of the secrets of the darkness, than recoil with Newman, in fear and tenderness, back to the infallibility of Romanism. Such a man is not likely to have been influenced by a few casual statements of difficulties which he had read of a thousand times before. I knew well what the state of your mind *had* been. I thought I knew what it *is*, and therefore never, except in a walk once, in answer to a searching question, did I ever hint to you what was the attraction to my mind in such books. A man, as it has been well said, 'ought to burn his own smoke, if he cannot convert it into clear flame.' For this reason, I shall not enter upon these points, except superficially. I am quite sure that what you say is true about getting truth—at least truth enough—at last, and I am quite willing to struggle on in twilight until the light comes. True, manly struggle cannot fail. I know that. Only a man must struggle alone. His own view of truth, or rather his own way of viewing it, and that alone, will give him rest. He can only *adopt* the views of other minds for a time; and so long as his own is inert, the help that he gets directly from others generally does no good. Indirect, casual hints sometimes do much. I have never said so much as this to any one in England, and, of course, you will kindly not even hint it. Here, in Germany, I have conversed much and freely on the points of difficulty. I have found minds here that understand me if they cannot help me, and in the conviction that a treasure lies near me in German literature, I am digging away night and day at the superincumbent earth, in order hereafter to get at it. Indeed, I have already plunged into it, perhaps too suddenly, considering my rudimental acquaintance with the language. Some things I am certain of, and these are my *Ursachen*, which cannot be taken away from me. I have got so far as this. Moral goodness and moral

beauty are realities, lying at the basis, and beneath all forms of the best religious expressions. They are no dream, and they are not mere utilitarian conveniences. That suspicion was an agony once. It is passing away. After finding littleness where I expected nobleness, and impurity where I thought there was spotlessness, again and again I despaired of the reality of goodness. But in all *that* struggle, I am thankful to say, the bewilderment never told upon my conduct. In the thickest darkness, I tried to keep my eye on nobleness and goodness, even when I suspected they were only Will-o'-the-Wisps. Indeed, I startled an Epicurean philosopher some time ago, here in Germany, with the vehemence with which I maintained this. He was defending Goethe's views and life, and I poured out my indignation in such a storm of fury, that he quite cowered before the blast, and between seven and eight next morning anxiously begged me to believe that he had overstated his own views. I had rather be a Stoic in hell-fire than an Epicurean on his principles, or Goethe's, if they be Goethe's. I am anxious to set you at rest upon this point, for really you are responsible for nothing. Indeed, a man must have been profoundly and incredibly ignorant of literature, if these things had presented themselves to him in a few conversations in a new light. As to the ministry, I am in infinite perplexity. To give it up seems throwing away the only opportunity of doing good in this short life that is now available to me. Yet to continue it, when my whole soul is struggling with meaning that I cannot make intelligible—when I am perpetually bewildering people, and saying the thing I do not mean—to go on teaching and preaching when my own heart is dark, and lacks the light I endeavour to impart—when I feel as if it lay upon me, like a destiny, to speak truth, and not as Cassandra, to be disbelieved, but to be for ever unintelligible to my brother man—is very wretched. . . .

I intend to spend the remainder of my time in Heidelberg. Several English families are here; some of them well-informed

and agreeable people. Heidelberg is a lovely spot. When I first saw it, I thought it the loveliest I had ever beheld. But it was summer then, and I was five years younger. Moreover, I have seen the grandest scenery perhaps on earth since then. Still I admire it much, very much, and love to wander alone beside its winding river, especially at sunset, when the broad stream of yellow light streams along its whole length, almost from Mannheim to where I stand. The castle heights and labyrinths, and the walks on the hill above, are all full of beauty. And now, my dear ——, farewell, and God bless you.

XVI.

Hatchett's Hotel, Piccadilly: January 1, 1847.

My dear ———,—As to all you said about a creed, I never knew any sane man who doubted any part of what you urged upon me so warmly. That Christianity is true, that Christ's character is high, that to do good is better than to do wrong, I suppose, are axioms. But Paulus, even Strauss, would admit all this, and Socinians would demand a great deal more before they would call a man a Christian. Such points never seemed uncertain to me, except in moments of very bad dyspepsia, and then the dimness of the eye makes everything look black. But you will remember that this creed leaves all that we are accustomed to consider the essentials of Christianity, as distinguished from natural religion, undetermined. For instance, suppose a man puts the question, *Who* was Christ? What are miracles? What do you mean by inspiration? Is the resurrection a fact or a myth? What saves a man—his own character, or that of another? Is the next life individual consciousness, or continuation of the consciousness of the universe? To these and twenty other questions which I could put, Krause would return one answer, Neander another, and Dr. Chalmers another; and I am certain that neither of the two last would be satisfied with even all that you urged as constituting Christianity—no, nor a great

deal more in addition. Those are not points on which any man in health can suffer a doubt to last three quarters of a second. And the questions I have mentioned, I mention not as perplexing myself (on that I say nothing), but as touching the real vitals of the question, which all you urge does *not* touch. But now to quit this subject. My mind is more under control than it was—my nerves braced by the surrender of Christchurch, and in proof of this, I mean to keep my weakness and wretchedness to myself, instead of plaguing my friends with them.

CHAPTER IV.

OXFORD.

Return to Cheltenham—Surrender of Curacy of Christchurch—He accepts the Charge of St. Ebbe's, Oxford—Position in Relation to the High Church and the Evangelical Parties—Results of his Work on the Parish of St. Ebbe's and on himself—Trinity Chapel, Brighton, is offered to him—He refuses but afterwards accepts the offer—Sad Presentiments.

AFTER an absence of nearly three months, Mr. Robertson returned to Cheltenham. He had during his stay at Heidelberg surrendered the curacy of Christchurch with feelings of unmixed pain.

My father (he writes from Cheltenham, March 2, 1847) showed me your letter to him containing an enquiry respecting my health, and I answer it in his stead. I have been very unwell, thoroughly done up, mentally and bodily. I wandered six weeks in the Tyrol alone, trying the effect of mountain air and hard exercise. After that, I spent about nine weeks at Heidelberg, where I took the duty, got much interested in and attached to the congregation, studied Goethe, Schiller, and Krause, and got back something like calmness and health again.

I am now well, but idle and useless. I have given up the curacy of Christchurch. If I take work, it must be single-handed. I am afraid I can no longer brook to walk in leading-strings; but, however, enough of this.

As his health increased and his mind recovered from the tempest which had swept over it, he began to be impatient for some labour. The Bishop of Calcutta offered him a chaplaincy in his diocese, with the promise of a canonry, but he did not wish to leave home. He then wrote to the Bishop of Oxford, with whom, as Archdeacon Wilberforce, he had been acquainted at Winchester, placing himself at his lordship's disposal, and asked for some employment.

The bishop at once offered him the charge of St. Ebbe's, Oxford. The church was situated in one of the worst parts of the town. The parish had not been regularly worked for some time, owing to the severe illness of the incumbent. It was a difficult post, and the emolument was very small. Mr. Robertson hesitated before accepting it, not on account of the disadvantages, but because of his disagreement with the known views of the Bishop of Oxford.

Before my son (writes Captain Robertson) went to St. Ebbe's, he saw the bishop in London, and frankly told him that he did not hold, and therefore could not preach, the doctrine of Baptismal Regeneration. The bishop replied, 'I give my clergy a large circle to work in, and if they do not step beyond that I do not interfere. I shall be glad, however, to hear your views on the subject.' An hour's conversation followed, and at the close his lordship said, 'Well, Mr. Robertson, you have well maintained your position, and I renew my offer.' It was at once accepted.

From his connection with the Bishop of Oxford, it has been hinted that Mr. Robertson sympathised at this time with the views of the High Church party. It may

be well here to set that question at rest. He had no sympathy with their views; but he had a great deal of sympathy with the men who held them, with their self-devotion, and with their writings. He reverenced the self-sacrificing work which they were performing among poor and neglected parishes. He said that, as a body, they had reasserted the doctrine of a spiritual resurrection, which had been almost put out of sight by the 'Evangelical' party. He read Newman's sermons with profit and delight till the day of his death. There was no book which he studied more carefully or held in higher honour than the 'Christian Year.' It seemed to him that some of its poems were little short of inspiration. He saw in the importance which the Tractarians gave to forms a valuable element which he never lost sight of in his teaching. Only, while they seemed to say that forms could produce life, he said that forms were necessary only to support life; but for that they were necessary. To use his own illustration: bread will not create life, but life cannot be kept up without bread. On the subject of Baptism, he felt no sympathy with the Evangelical view, which left it doubtful whether the baptized child was a child of God or not; but because the Tractarian view declared that all *baptized* persons were children of God, he could so far sympathise with it. But on all other points, starting as he did from the basis that Baptism declared and did not create the *fact* of sonship, his difference was radical. The persecution, too, which this party suffered, secured his sympathy. He even believed that it had received

but scant justice from one with whom he largely agreed. He maintained that Dr. Arnold did not stand quite impartially between the Evangelicals and Tractarians, but judged the former less severely than the latter. On the other hand, it must be said that he himself showed but scant justice to the Evangelical party. He seems to have imputed to all its adherents the views of the *Record* newspaper. He sometimes forces conclusions upon them which the great body of them would repudiate. He overstates, unconsciously, some of their opinions. If there was any intolerance in his nature it oozed out here. But surrounded as he was by them at Brighton; constantly attacked, by some manfully, by others in an underhand manner; the victim of innuendos and slander, it was difficult for him always to be smooth-tongued. Nor was he now or afterwards the leader or the servant of any party in the Church. He stood alone. He fought out his principles alone. He has been called a follower of Mr. Maurice; but though holding Mr. Maurice in veneration, he differed on many and important points from both him and Professor Kingsley. He was the child of no theological father. At this time, however, when a new impulse had come upon his life—when he was unshackled by a subordinate position—he was least of all thinking of party opposition or party teaching. One was his Captain, even Christ; and he did not care, provided he fought under Him the good fight, what regiment he belonged to. All were his brothers in arms who were loyal to his Master's cause. He was ready, under great worldly disadvan-

tages, to lead the forlorn hope which the bishop offered him. He did not accept it with any bright expectations. His experience, as he states in the following letter, had been very painful:—

Cheltenham: May 3, 1847.

I have just accepted St. Ebbe's, Oxford (offered by the bishop), after once refusing it. But as he seemed desirous, I should take it, I consented, though reluctantly. It is a forlorn hope, I fear, and the stipend is miserable; . . . . and altogether I feel depressed at the prospect of a residence in Oxford, with its cold, formal, forbidding conventionalisms. But for the present it seems the path of duty, and I am prepared to give it a fair trial. Nor do I ever expect to find the line of duty—lying, as it does, up the hill, with the cross at the top of it—a pleasant path.

. . . . I have lately, as I told you, given up Christchurch here with feelings of inexpressible pain. A ministry of twilight, at the best, and difficulty, has closed. Every effort has been crowned with the most signal failure, and I shrink sometimes almost in torture from the idea of beginning work again, with the possibility of five such years once more before me. This is not an encouraging tone of mind to begin a ministry with, so beset with difficulties as St. Ebbe's. However, as I certainly have no earthly inducement to take it, perhaps the work may be blest, even though mine.

In appearance, at least, that work was blest. The place entirely yielded to him. The usual attendants of the church, as well as the rough and poor people of the parish, among whom he laboured faithfully, made themselves over to him at once. The undergraduates, a sensitive touchstone of a man's worth, dropped in one

by one at first, and then rushed to hear him in crowds. 'Every Sunday,' says a friend who visited him at Oxford, 'the church was thronged with these young men, who hung breathlessly on every word he uttered.' Here, then, for the first time, he began to make himself felt, and to feel what he could do. Here, for the first time, he was entirely free; able to say, without opposition from without, without a shadow of inward restraint, the thing in his own heart. Here, too, for the first time, perhaps, he rested firmly on principles which he had secured at the price of a terrible spiritual contest. He became more peaceful. The dark shadow of failure began to pass away. But he was ill at ease; life lay upon him very heavily; it seemed, do what he might, that he could not be happy.

It was now that, after two months of work at St. Ebbe's, Trinity Chapel, Brighton, vacant by the retirement of Mr. Kennaway, was offered to him. He refused at once.

He thought it would be a discourtesy to the bishop, and a failure in manly duty, to surrender St. Ebbe's. The material advantages he would gain made him suspicious of himself. The following letters give the further history of this transaction, exhibit the self-sacrificing spirit which inspired his life, and will close this brief record of his Oxford ministry:—

Oxford: July 3, 1847.

My plans, as you are rightly informed, are altered, and I am only waiting till the bishop can release me by sending a substitute, to go to Brighton. I refused Trinity at first

distinctly; but after a day or two a letter came expressing the regret of the trustees, Rev. James Anderson, Lord Teignmouth, and Mr. Thornton, at my decision, and asking me to reconsider it. At the same time they enclosed a letter from the Bishop of Oxford, in answer to a request from them, which gave them permission to open the negotiation again, by releasing me, if I wished, from my engagement. I should tell you that this letter came just as I was in great perplexity about certain difficulties which had arisen in the way of a residence in Oxford, and singularly coincidental in point of time. I therefore referred it to the bishop's decision, asking his opinion; not as to what he would like, for I knew he would wish me to keep Oxford; nor as to what would be most advantageous to me, for 300*l.* a year is better than 115*l.*, but what he thought my duty: considering the sphere of usefulness apparent in Oxford, and the drawbacks in a watering-place ministry, such as the temptations to vanity, the improbability of influencing character deeply, &c. He replied that he thought it my duty to accept Trinity, so I go, reluctantly. . . . I much, deeply regret that difficulties have prevented my remaining. So grand an opening for important, but not glittering usefulness, I shall probably never have again. However, I believe, if I can read my own heart, that I have acted honestly. I am sure I go to a place from which I shrink, and with small hope, and much misgiving.

However, I will try to do my work. My life, if I may judge by the decline of mental accuracy, and strength, and the weakening of nerve, has got more than half way, and the rest is down-hill. The half-way house is behind: and if Brighton be another form of Cheltenham, home cannot be very far off. I am getting tired. And the complexion of my spontaneous thoughts now is increasing the contemplation of rest. Rest in God and Love. Deep repose in that still country where the mystery of this strange life is solved, and the most feverish heart lays down its load at last.

CHAPTER V.

BRIGHTON—1847, 1848.

Arrival at Brighton—Trinity Chapel—Death of his Infant Daughter—Self-analysis and Resolutions on entering on his Ministry at Brighton—First Sermon—Characteristics of his Teaching—Rapid Increase of his Congregation—Appreciated by Servants and Working Men—Wide Sphere of Work at Brighton—The Questions raised by the Revolutions of 1848, and how he met them—Afternoon Lectures on the First Book of Samuel—Results of these Lectures—Foundation of the Working Man's Institute—He is asked to deliver the Opening Lecture—His Answer, and his Opinions on the Institution—Delivery of the First Address—His boldness of Speech—Endeavour to reconcile Rich and Poor—Qualifications which fitted him to be a Mediator.

Letters from August 9, 1847, to January 5, 1849.

IN the August of 1847 Mr. Robertson came to Brighton. The short period during which he had preached at Oxford was the pause which always occurs after a revolution of thought, before the new ideas have gained sufficient strength and roundness to be used with ease. At Oxford he was like the swimmer who has for the first time ventured into deep water; at Brighton he struck out boldly into the open sea. There was no hesitation, no reticence in his teaching. In the silence and solitude of the mountains of

the Tyrol, his 'soul, left to explore its own recesses, and to feel its nothingness in the presence of the Infinite,' had fixed its foundations deep and sure. From henceforward, his religious convictions never wavered, and the principles of his teaching never changed.

The sunny aspect of his new home pleased him. The bracing air, the clear sea, and the breezy expanse of pasture above the town, seemed to sympathise with his active frame, his free mind, and his large heart. The constant change of light and shadow on the wide waters of the Channel, and on the grassy bosses and slopes of the Downs, freed the scenery from the monotony which made him impatient; and the magnificent cloud-land and the sunsets which adorn the evenings of Brighton came upon him then, and always, with a surprise of pleasure. It was his custom, when worn out with the excitement of work, or when he was preparing in thought his sermons, to walk along the edge of the cliffs, or into the green recesses of the old coast line, and sitting down where he could command a full view of sea and sky, restore his heart with the calm, or awake his imagination with the beauty of the landscape.

But, on his first coming to Brighton, he had but few moments of quiet or enjoyment. He was wholly occupied in house hunting, and with the arrangements necessary for assuming the direction of Trinity Chapel. The following letters sum up the history of the first few months of his life at Brighton:—

9 Montpelier Terrace, Brighton: August 9, 1847.

My dear ——,—At last I am able to tell you that we have fixed upon a house—the above being the address—into which we hope to move to-morrow. . . . I can form no conception yet of how I shall like my work. Brighton is too large to have the disagreeable peculiarities of Cheltenham; and Kennaway's congregation seems to be chiefly composed of tradesmen. That will relieve me from much that I expected of unpleasantness. Still, looking at the many disadvantages there are, I have great misgivings as to that kind of success which a proprietary-chapel needs—the filling of seats, &c. But Brighton seems a healthy place, and I am sure it is bracing. My wife is decidedly better than in Cheltenham; and the heir to my estates and title spends hours on the beach, tossing stones into the sea, without speculating about their future destinies, or the probable depth of the ocean into which they fall.

9 Montpelier Terrace, Brighton: November 29, 1847.

My dear ——,—I only write you one line to tell you of a sad loss and disappointment we have just sustained. My wife has been prematurely confined, and the little girl, a perfectly beautiful little thing, is dead. I have just returned from putting my little beautiful one myself into her grave, after a last look at her calm, placid countenance lying in her coffin. It was by starlight, with only the sexton present; but it was more congenial to my heart to bury her so than in the midst of a crowd, in the glaring daylight, with a service gabbled over her. In the infinite expanse of darkness there was more of heaven and more of God, to my soul at least, and more of that deep, still rest, more profound than death, of which death is but a shadow, for which we are all craving, and in the depths of which we shall soon be—how soon! My poor wife is sadly cut up, and looking ghastly and haggard;

but Taylor says she is going on perfectly well. I was away in London when it took place (Friday), and did not get home till Saturday night to be startled by the unexpected news. How I got through yesterday's services I scarcely know, unprepared and upset as I was; but I did get through. I am very much disappointed, but I *feel* that Infinite Love guides all.

An account of his ministry at Brighton cannot have a better introduction than the following, written on his arrival at Brighton. It is full of careful foresight of the difficulties likely to beset him. It marks the earnestness with which he studied his own heart, and resolved to do his duty.

1. I want two things—habit of order and *de suite*. I begin many things and rebegin, each time with greater disrelish and self-distrust. At last, life will be a broken series of unfinished enterprises.

Hence, I must resolve to finish: and to do this, I must not undertake till I have well weighed, e.g. I will not now give up German. I will study scripture-books thoroughly through, histories separately and thoroughly.

I am conscious of having developed my mind and character more truly, and with more fidelity at Winchester than anywhere. Looking back, I think I perceive reasons for this. First, I went out little: hence, perfected what I undertook before fresh impulses started up to destroy the novelty and interest of the impulse already set in motion. It came to its limit unexhausted, e.g. in studying Edwards.

Hence, I think, it will be wise at Brighton to go out little; and even to exercise self-denial in this. But I will not commit myself to any plan by *expressed* resolve. I have now only a few years to live. 'Mein Gott! ernst ist das Leben! möchte ich es fühlen!'

My danger is excitability—even in Scripture conversations was it not so? This makes me effeminate, irresolute, weak in character—led by circumstances, not bending them by strong will to my own plan and purpose. Therefore, I must seek calm in regular duty, avoiding desultory reading—desultory visits.

2. *Artificial excellences.*—Goodness demands a certain degree of nerve, impulse, sudden inspiration. Characters too much trained miss these. Some turn their eyes perpetually on self in painful self-examination. Suspicion destroys the *élan* of virtue, its freshness, grace, beauty, and spontaneousness. Artificial merits are like artificial flowers—scentless. Cultivate natural, not unnatural excellences.

3. *Explanations* are bad things. 'Man betrügt sich oder den andern, und meist beide. Götz.' You preserve your own dignity by not entering into them. The character which cannot defend itself is not worth defending.

4. *My mind is difficult to get into activity*—unbewegsam. Therefore, in order to prepare for speaking, preaching, &c., it is good to take a stirring book, even if not directly touching upon the subject in hand. Love is all with me. Mental power comes from interest in a subject. What I have to set in motion is some grand notion—such as duty, beauty, time in its rapid flight, &c.

He preached for the first time in Trinity Chapel on the 15th of August 1847. His sermon, on a favourite subject—'The Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified,' &c. —at once awoke criticism and interest. As his peculiar views developed themselves, many of the old congregation left the church. Their places were rapidly filled up. Thoughtful and eager-minded men came in, by degrees, from all parts of Brighton, attracted not only by his earnest eloquence, but by his original

thought and clear reasoning. He clothed in fresh brightness the truths which, because their garments were worn out, men had ignorantly imagined to be exhausted. He drew out the living inspiration of the Bible, and especially of the historical portions of the Old Testament. He made men feel the life which ran through the doctrinal statements of the Prayer Book. Whatever he touched sprang into being; and many of his hearers entered on a new existence. Other men who were engaged in the great questions of society and of the world, were drawn to his ministry by the wide knowledge which he showed of past history, and by the force with which he applied Christianity to the social problems of the present age. Young men eagerly listened to his delicate analysis of the human heart, and of those difficulties of religious thought which, even now presenting themselves for solution, had only then begun to agitate the mind of England. Others of a lighter cast came to enjoy the brilliant imagery and the rapid rush of clear language. Servants and working-men came to hear with reverence and affection a man who spoke as if his whole being were in the words he used, and who seemed to sympathise with their lives as none had ever done before.

The appreciation of his teaching by servants, a class seldom reached by an intellectual preacher, was remarkable. The story which follows is extracted from a short memoir published after his death :—

On the morning of Christmas Day 1847, scarcely five months after his arrival at Brighton, Mr. Robertson, on ascending to

his reading-desk, found there a set of handsome prayer-books, which had been presented to him by the servants of families attending the chapel, as a Christmas offering. Naturally affected by this evidence of kindly feeling, he in his sermon took occasion to advert to the subject of presents, and drew a picture of the delight which would fill the heart of a fond brother who, on the morning of his birthday, should awake and find in his chamber a rose placed there by sisterly affection. The simple gift, almost valueless in itself, would be more prized by the brother's heart than a purse of gold. The application of the incident he left to those who could best understand its hidden meaning. The gift was subsequently acknowledged by the following letter:—

'9 Montpelier Terrace, Brighton: December 27, 1847.

'My dear Friends,—I should not satisfy my own heart if I were not to tell you how much I was gratified on Christmas Day by your thoughtful offering of the new books for Trinity Chapel. It would be injustice to you if I were to say this with the idea that it emanated from any personal feeling towards myself, who am as yet a stranger among you. I am persuaded that your higher motive was the wish to adorn the services of a house dedicated to the worship of God; but, as the minister of that house, it will not be out of place if the thanks are expressed by me. I feel that it was kindly imagined and delicately done; and I am the more touched by being told that all who joined in presenting it are in circumstances of life which make the offering doubly precious. I shall never read out of those books without the inspiring feeling that there are *hearts* around me.

'I am, my dear friends,

'Your affectionate minister,

'Frederick W. Robertson.'

As the congregation became larger, and he recognised the several elements which composed it, his sense of the importance of his work increased, and with that his interest in his duty.

And the town in which he was now placed opened to him a fitting field for his earnestness and his genius. The change from Cheltenham to Oxford had not been greater than was now the change from Oxford to Brighton. He had formerly left a half-fashionable place, with narrow interests, and a confined sphere of thought, for one of the thinking centres of England, where all social, political, and theological questions were debated with as much eagerness as latitude. There he had easily taken his place as an inspiriting and sympathising teacher. He was now transferred to a town which, more, perhaps, than any other in England, has among its population the sharp contrasts which mutually irritate one another into aggressive life in London. He came into contact at Brighton with religious tendencies and sects as extreme as at Cheltenham, but they were opposed more strongly than at Cheltenham by a bold freedom of thought among the upper and lower classes, which tended in the former to carelessness or silent contempt for Christianity, and in the latter to open infidelity. He met with men of all classes, whose opinions had been formed and widened in the storm and stress of London life, and with others, whose prejudices were as blind as those of the smallest village in England. He associated with clergymen of all religious denominations, who had rendered themselves known by their eloquence

and their writings or by their active leadership of party. He mingled with persons of every shade of Conservatism and Liberalism, and, among the working men, with large numbers of hot and eager Chartists.

If he had been as fresh and enthusiastic as he had been six years before, he would, like a young soldier, have rejoiced at his position, placed thus in the forefront of the battle. But, as we have seen, he was worn and weary.

He had a presentiment, which was not altogether painful to him, that his work—done as he did it, with a throbbing brain, with nerves strung to their utmost tension, and with a physical excitement which was all the more consuming from being mastered in its outward forms—would kill him in a few years. He resolved to crowd into this short time all he could. He had long felt that Christianity was too much preached as theology, too little as the religion of daily life; too much as a religion of feeling, too little as a religion of principles; too much as a religion only for individuals, too little as a religion for nations and for the world. He determined to make it bear upon the social state of all classes, upon the questions which agitated society, upon the great movements of the world.

Shortly after his arrival at Brighton, he had an opportunity for carrying out his intention. The great surge which took its impulse from the volcanic outburst of February 1848, in Paris, rolled over half of Europe. The decrees of February 25, 26, by which Lamartine declared France republican, and which practically

proclaimed Socialism as well as Communism, chimed in with the hopes of all the unregulated and uneducated minds among the working classes. The cry of Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity, and the demands based upon this watchword, created a wild fear in some Englishmen, and a wild joy in others, which were alike irrational. No man in society could be silent on these subjects. Mr. Robertson resolved not to be silent in the pulpit. His spirit was stirred within him, as the spirits of Coleridge and of Wordsworth had been at the beginning of a greater revolution. He rejoiced in the downfall of old oppressions; and in the 'young cries of Freedom,' he thought that he heard the wheels of the chariot of the Son of Man, coming nearer and nearer to vindicate the cause of the poor. He writes in 1848 :—

The world has become a new one since we met. To my mind, it is a world full of hope, even to bursting. I wonder what you think of all these tumults :

> For all the past of time reveals
> A bridal dawn of thunder-peals,
> Wherever thought hath wedded fact.

Some outlines of a kingdom of Christ begin to glimmer, albeit very faintly, and far off, perhaps, by many, many centuries. Nevertheless, a few strokes of the rough sketch by a master-hand are worth the seeing, though no one knows yet how they shall be filled up. And those bold, free, dashing marks are made too plainly to be ever done out again. Made in blood, as they always are, and made somewhat rudely; but the Master-Hand is visible through the great red splotches on the canvas of the universe. I could almost say sometimes, in fulness of heart, 'Now let Thy servant depart in peace.'

I have been very much overdone by work here. It is extremely trying; full of encouragement, but full of a far larger amount of misunderstanding and dislike than I expected to meet with. And I work alone with 'many adversaries,' and few to bless; but with a very distinct conviction that I am doing something; and for that I am grateful, for it is well nigh the only thing that is worth the living for.

He had already begun, in January 1848, a course of lectures on the first book of Samuel. In explaining the history contained in that book he necessarily entered on questions belonging to the life of society, and to the rise and progress of national ideas. At the very beginning of his exposition he was forced to speak of a great revolution. As he went on, he came into contact with the subject of the rights of property and the rights of labour;* and, in the election of David instead of Saul, he was obliged to discuss the limits of authority, and how far an unjust or a weak king is a rightful ruler of a people. So there was scarcely a question debated in 1848 which was not brought before him. He did not refuse them. They were all treated of; but as Israelitish, not as modern questions. It was not his fault that these lectures, running side by side with the national convulsions and social excitement of Europe and England, had a double interest—an ancient and a modern one. It was not his fault that men did what he could not do in the pulpit, and applied the principles which he found in the first book of Samuel, to the society and times in which they lived.

* See this subject fully carried out in Sermon, vol. i. p. 275; vol. ii. p. 1.

However, he irritated and terrified almost all parties in Brighton. A cry was raised against him. He was spoken of as a Revolutionist and a Democrat. Some even went so far as to complain to the bishop of the diocese that he was preaching politics. He answered that, if the principles revealed in the inspired history of Israelitish society happened to be universal, and to fit the events going on in 1848, it only proved the deep inspiration and universal character of the Bible, and he was not to be blamed. On the other hand, working-men who were themselves Revolutionist in feeling, and all who saw something deeper in the revolutions than a mere blind attack upon existing Governments, listened to these lectures as sincere endeavours towards a Christian solution of great problems. Many a man traces to their influence upon him his escape from the false fraternity and the false freedom of Socialism, into a higher region of thought, where a truer brotherhood and a purer liberty were conferred on him, in Christ. But not only in the pulpit, where he was necessarily shackled, did he meet these questions. A better and a more public opportunity was soon afforded him. In the beginning of the year 1848, he had visited, during a severe illness, Mr. Holtham, a member of his congregation. 'I found one thought,' Mr. Robertson says, 'uppermost in his mind: how shall I do good to the working-classes?' Their consultations for many weeks on the subject resulted in a steady effort to establish a Working-Man's Institute at Brighton. The following is an extract from a letter of Mr. Holtham:—

MY DEAR SIR,— . . . Some day, when you have ten minutes' leisure, I want to ask your opinion as to whether anything can be done to awaken the minds of the working-men (as yet totally sealed) to the subject of religion.

How I wish that you had the strength of ten men, or that we had a few men like you. From such as you the working-men would learn that religion, true religion, is really comprehensible; that its dogmas are consistent with plain reason—that its teaching is in harmony with *their* consciousness of truth, justice, and generosity, and that in becoming Christians they need not cease to be men.

I am more and more impressed with the width and depth of the gulf which exists, and (as intelligence of a certain sort increases) increases between this class and the teachers of religion, and sometimes I really stand aghast and confounded at the mystery involved in it. If ever there was a voice, 'not loud but deep' to reach—if ever there was a life to awaken the working-man's sympathy and affection—surely that voice with its 'Come unto me,' surely that life of sacrifice and earnest tenderness, were, and are, all that could be needed; and I think both of us have remarked that not only in this country, but in others, perhaps more strikingly where the working clergy have engraved more deeply than here the history of Jesus upon the hearts of the poor, there *are* traces of a love and reverence for Him, making themselves distinctly seen even in and through the collisions and distractions of life.

Surely, then, all that is wanted is the adoption of an apostolic spirit—the real preaching of Christ to the poor—of Christ, the human, yet how divine; the labouring, the loving, the exalting *Saviour of the people.*

He threw himself with courage—and it needed courage at that time, with enthusiasm—and it needed enthusiasm, into Mr. Holtham's plan. The institute was

set on foot. It was supported by the subscription of a penny a week from each of the members. More than a thousand put down their names. They cleaned and papered, and furnished the house in which they met, with their own hands. The library was, for the most part, bought by themselves. In this way their independence was secured. But they were not too haughty to accept assistance and gifts of books from the wealthy. Thus, in accordance with one of Mr. Robertson's deepest desires, the rich and the poor were brought together, on the ground of sympathy. He was asked by the committee, which was composed solely of working-men, to open the institute by an address. He answered in a letter, which shows that even then, scarcely a year after his arrival in Brighton, the isolation which so painfully affected his career had already begun:—

I do not think I am at all the man that should be selected. They should have some one of standing and influence in the town, and I am almost a stranger; and my taking so prominent a position might fairly be construed into assumption. Again, I am much afraid that my name might do them harm rather than good. They wish not to be identified at all with party politics and party religion; and I fear that in minds of very many of the more influential inhabitants of the town my name being made conspicuous would be a suspicious circumstance. It is my conviction that an address from me would damage their cause. For though the institution is intended to be self-supporting, yet there is no reason why it should wilfully throw away its chances of assistance from the richer classes, and I am quite sure that of these very many, whether reasonably or unreasonably, are prejudiced against

me, and perhaps the professedly religious portion of society most strongly so. Now, I do think this is a point for very serious consideration, and I think it ought to be distinctly suggested to the committee before I can be in a position to comply with or decline complying with their request. Besides this, I believe that they have erred in their estimate of my mental calibre. I wish most earnestly, for their own sakes, that they would select a better man.

Two other letters written at this time and bearing on the subject are subjoined:—

Last night I attended the meeting of the Working-Man's Institute, and was very much struck with the genuine, manly, moral tone of the speakers. I went home with quite elevated hopes for my country when I compared the tone with that of the French clubs. And my whole heart sympathised with what your feelings must have been in the success of your brave efforts. Of course, people who expect in it a perfect Utopia will be disappointed or gratified by finding it *so far* a failure. But the similar institutions of the upper classes have been, like all human things, chequered with good and evil—a means of increasing the powers of good men for good, and those of bad men for bad. You do not expect more than this, the inevitable result of all powers and privileges added to humanity. But they *must* be added, come what may. There is no other intelligible principle which will not be compelled in consistency to recognise barbarism as the highest state.

The following, written to Lady Henley, gives an account of his hopes and fears:—

I am anxious to enlist your sympathy in the cause which I am trying to assist. The case is this. About 1,100 working-men in this town have just organised themselves into an association which, by a small weekly subscription, enables them to

have a library and reading-room. Their proceedings hitherto have been marked by singular judgment and caution, except in one point—that they have unexpectedly applied to me to give them an opening address.

A large number of these are intelligent Chartists, and there is some misgiving in a few minds as to what will be the result of this movement, and some suspicion of its being only a political engine.

My reasons for being anxious about this effort are these—it will be made. The working-men have as much right to a library and reading-room as the gentlemen at Folthorp's or the tradesmen at the Athenæum. The only question is, whether it shall be met warmly on our parts, or with that coldness which deepens the suspicion, already rankling in the lower classes, that their superiors are willing for them to improve so long as they themselves are allowed to have the leading-strings.

The selection of books for the library is a matter of very great importance; as I have become aware, since getting a little insight into the working of this institute, of an amount of bitterness and jealousy, and hatred of things as they are, which I had not before suspected in its full extent. And people go on saying, 'Peace, peace, when there is no peace!'

The address was delivered on Monday, October 23, 1848. It was listened to with deep admiration and attention. It was so eloquent; the voice and manner with which it was delivered were so thrilling, the earnestness and deep belief of the speaker in all that he said were so impressive, that men said the words seemed imprinted on their characters for ever. It was moreover a brave and noble speech, more brave and noble than can be easily understood at present. Fifteen years

ago the feelings and opinions on the social relations of the upper and lower ranks of society, which are common now, were very uncommon, especially on the lips of clergymen. The 'elevation of the working-classes,' meant to most men at that time, the destruction of the aristocracy and the monarchy: to own any sympathy with a Chartist was to acknowledge oneself a dangerous character: to speak of the wrongs of the labouring men was to initiate a revolution: to use the words, 'liberty, equality, and fraternity,' and to say that they had a meaning and a truth in them, was to that large class of persons to whom terms have only one meaning and truth only one side—to whom error is error and nothing more—teaching which was perilous in a politician, but almost impious in a clergyman. Supported by his faith in truth, Mr. Robertson cared for none of these things. He taught the right, and left the seed to its own vitality. It cost him ease and finally his life to speak, but he would not be silent. The misunderstanding and censure which he incurred stung him acutely, but could not sting him into faithlessness to duty. He did not seek for martyrdom: few men have ever shrunk more painfully from publicity; but he steadfastly resolved to fulfil his work and to bear its cross. One class, though for a long time suspicious, received his words with joy, and hailed him as a faithful friend. The working-men of Brighton felt that, at last, a minister of the Church of England had entered into their aspirations and their wrongs. And because they were sympathised with as men, and neither patronised

nor flattered, neither feared nor despised, they were ready to lay aside prejudice, and hear what a man of another class than their own had to say upon the subjects which were agitating them. There was not one of these subjects which he shrank from in his lecture. To omit one he would have considered cowardly: to leave one without an attempt at solving it, unworthy of a man whose business was thought: to touch upon one without bringing Christian principles to bear upon it, unworthy in a minister of Christ. The whole address may be described as an effort to destroy the errors of socialistic theories, not by denouncing them, but by holding forth the truths which lay beneath them and gave them their vitality: to show that these truths were recognised in Christianity and placed there upon a common ground —where the various classes of society could meet and merge their differences in sympathy and love.

For this task of reconciliation he was qualified, not only by his extensive knowledge of history and political economy, but also by the many-sidedness of his views and feelings, and by the chivalry and justice of his character.

There was a kind of double nature in him. He was instinctively a Tory, but he was by conviction a Liberal. His early training at home, his reverence and his desire for a military career, cherished in him the flower of chivalrous obedience, and made him an enthusiastic royalist. 'I suspect,' he says, 'that if the crown were ever to tyrannise, and the people were to rise, I should be found fighting against the mob, at least if, unfortu-

nately, a queen were sovereign.' He was aristocratic in feeling, in tastes, and in sensitiveness. But though his tastes were with aristocracy, his principles were with democracy. His duty to the race was stronger than his sympathy with a class. He therefore resolutely subordinated the latter to the former. He recoiled also from the vulgarity, the loud assertiveness and obtrusiveness of the mob; but he was, on the other hand, too just not to make allowances for the want of polite training and education. By a manly suppression then of his ultra-sensitiveness, he soon became capable of recognising, beneath the rough exterior of the working-men, their nobility of character. Perhaps, also, the chivalry of his nature, which would have enlisted him, like Falkland, on the side of Charles I. in the civil war, because the king was unfortunate, was now enlisted on the side of the working-classes for the same reason. It was enough for one who once wished that he had been a knight of the olden time.

From all this it followed that his life became a contest between his tastes and his principles, between his sympathies and his duties. He thought himself that 'this discord in him marred his usefulness.' Looking at it more closely, it seems to be that very element of discord, or rather of manifoldness, in his character which made his usefulness. Feeling with and comprehending the nature of *both* sections of society, he was, on the one hand, fitted to hold the scales, to judge, and make peace between the upper and lower classes, and, on the other, prevented from being seduced by the plausibilities of

Socialism, or blinded by the prejudices and fears of extreme Conservatism.

Thus, the disturbances in Europe, during which the evils suffered by the working poor rose to the surface of society, did not frighten him out of his principles.

> What appals me (he says, writing in 1851), is to see the way in which persons, once Liberal, are now recoiling from their own principles, terrified by the state of the Continent, and saying that we must stem the tide of democracy, and support the Conservatives. Why, what has ever made democracy dangerous but Conservatism? The French revolution! Socialism! Why, these men seem to forget that these things came out of Toryism, which forced the people into madness. What makes rivers and canals overflow—the deep channel cut ever deeper, or the dam put across by wise people to stop them?

On the other hand, he was not swept away into the alluring current of Socialism. His glance at the politics and passions of the time was calm and clear. His aristocratic tastes, his sympathy with the idea of rank, and his reverence for the past, made it impossible that he should be a Radical. And he systematically opposed Socialism on economical as well as on Christian grounds, as dangerous to the State, and as destructive of the liberty it professed to confer. The result was, that speaking at one time like a Liberal, and at another like a Conservative, he was misunderstood, and reckoned an enemy by the extreme spirits of both parties. He saw the truth itself of the question, while they wished him only to see the half

truths which they each held. He met the fate of those who are beyond their time.

He felt, however, that in the conflict in his own mind, he needed some fixed ground on which to rest. Dragged aside by two extremes, he fell back on Christianity, not as a *via media*, but as declaring truths which embraced in their ample round the wisdom of Conservatism, and the progressive spirit of Liberalism, which solved the questions of the day—neither by laying down laws, nor by coercive measures for oppression or for liberty, but by spreading in all classes a spirit of love, of duty, and of mutual respect. This was the ruling idea of this opening address. It was immediately published, and drew comments on it from all sections of the press. The letters to Mr. Moncrieff which are subjoined are an answer, apparently, to some objections made to this lecture, and fittingly begin the letters appended to this chapter:—

XVII.

9 Montpelier Terrace, Brighton: January 5, 1849.*

My dear Moncrieff,—It was a great pleasure to see your hand-writing again after so long a silence. A few days ago, I received a *paquet* containing some Christmas lines, signed 'G. R. M.' Were they yours? If so, thank you very much for them. You were more mindful than I of the claims of

* Though written in 1849, the two letters to Mr. Moncrieff belong, from their connection with the address, to the year 1848, and are therefore inserted here.

friendship; at least, in appearance; for, to say the truth, I was rather ashamed of my 'Address,' and was very unwilling that it should be printed;. as an extempore speech never should be submitted to the scrutiny of the closet in its extempore state. For this reason I did not send you a copy; but yesterday, on the receipt of your letter, I gave orders to have one forwarded to you. Now to the point of your note. I have not seen the article in the *Observer*, and very likely shall not see it. My lecture was a hasty production, and offers a mark for severe criticism in respect of many inaccuracies and more inelegancies, as it is only the short-hand report in the newspaper corrected, and corrected carelessly, for which I have no excuse but pressure of work. It has attracted more notice than it deserved, and than I expected, vituperative and laudatory; has been read by her Majesty; distributed by nobles and Quakers; sneered at by Conservatives; praised by Tories; slanged by Radicals, and swallowed, with wry faces, by Chartists. But I do not mean to notice any attacks upon it. It is very faulty; but I know that it has done good. I only wish now that I had done it in a less hasty way. If you wish to annihilate the old lady of the *Christian Observer*, I shall only say, '*Sanguine placâsti Frederick et virgine cæsa.*' For I take for granted she is an old maid, male or female. Is it not melancholy that the popular religion only represents the female element in the national mind, and that hence it is at once devotional, slanderous, timid, gossiping, narrow, shrieking, and prudish? If you make a bonfire of her, will you let me see the paper with which you light the pyre?

Ever affectionately yours,

F. W. R.

P.S.—I should like to have a chat with you on the marvellous events of the past year. Not forgetting the Californian Pactolus, which bids fair to create many a Midas, and decorate him afterwards with ears asinine. As to Europe, I am in ecstasy:—

For all the past of time reveals
A bridal dawn of thunder peals,
Wherever thought hath wedded fact.

And I really cannot see that the horrors and atrocities with which the right cause has been advanced, ought to lead to any faithless doubt of the results, or whether it be on the whole the cause of God or not: or that the dungeons of the Inquisition and the robber castles of the aristocracy in former ages proved Christianity to be infernal, or the idea of gradations in rank impracticable and diabolical. But I find myself in a minority here on that point, and excommunicated by the religious and respectable. In the midst of all which, I humbly console myself with remembering that One before whom my spirit bows with adoration profounder in proportion as I understand Him and His infinite mind, was in His day reckoned an infidel and a latitudinarian worldling by the religious, and an anarchist whom it was fatal to the respectability of Cæsar's friend to even defend. Oh, for His sublime, brave, divine truthfulness!

XVIII.

1849.

My dear Moncrieff,—Thank you much for your kind letter. It is refreshing to meet with sympathy of sentiment on such matters, for the only satisfaction I get from being in a 'prominent position' is that of being a good butt for rotten eggs and cabbage-stalks. Loving peace and sympathy, it is saddening to be perpetually provoking 'a sword.'

Now for your strictures—for which I am most grateful, and with which I—do I agree? Yes, and no.

I thought I had based distinctly my own convictions on the Bible, in a way visible to every one, as the source from whence I drew my anticipations for the future. And most unquestionably it is only from thence, that is, from Christ's life and mind expressed in His life, that my views respecting

brotherhood, &c., are deduced. No doubt I am called a Radical, but my radicalism is not political, but religious—a principle, and not a scheme—a conviction of the rights of others, and I am quite sure no wish to assert my own. When I first heard the charge of radicalism, some time back, I was astounded, for I had not looked at myself in the glass for a long period, and knew not what manner of man I was. I had tried to *feel* the meaning of Christ's words, and to make my heart beat with His; and so I became what they call a Radical. Nevertheless, the Radicals and Chartists refuse to own me as a brother, and call me a rabid Tory. However, of one thing I have become distinctly conscious—that my motto for life, my whole heart's expression, is, 'None but Christ;' not in the (so-called) evangelical sense, which I take to be the sickliest cant that has appeared since the Pharisees' bare record to the gracious words which He spake, and then tried to cast him headlong from the hill of Nazareth; but in a deeper, real sense—the mind of Christ; to feel as He felt; to judge the world, and to estimate the world's maxims, as He judged and estimated. That is the one thing worth living for. To realise that, is to feel 'none but Christ.' But then, in proportion as a man does that, he is stripping himself of garment after garment, till his soul becomes naked of that which once seemed part of himself; he is not only giving up prejudice after prejudice, but also renouncing sympathy after sympathy with friends whose smile and approbation was once his life, till he begins to suspect that he will be very soon alone with Christ. More awful than I can express. To believe that, and still press on, is what I mean by the sentence, 'None but Christ.' I do not know that I can express all I mean, but sometimes it is to me a sense almost insupportable of silence, and stillness, and solitariness.

I think there is perhaps a difference in our views of brotherhood, but in words more than in reality. I could not say that one man is not neighbour to another, except so far as

they *recognise* the Father. Nor could I say that they are not brethren, except in Christ, and as recipients of his Spirit. I believe brotherhood and neighbourhood to be real, *prior* to the acceptance of these truths—real, not realised, but yet to be realised as a duty. And the realisation of them leads to the higher, truer union—union in Christ. The Samaritan was neighbour to the Jew by benevolence, whether the Jew recognised it or not, and whether the Samaritan was, or was not, distinctly conscious of their relation to a common Father. A man, as man, is the child of God; and one child is brother to another, whether they are conscious of their heritage relationship or not. The operatives whom I addressed were my brother men — though very possibly not my brother Christians, for a large proportion of them were infidels, and a very large number Chartists. And brotherly kindness is brotherly kindness, whether the command of Christ has been received and understood or not. I can go to a man and say, 'Love your brother,' without telling him that Christ commands him so to do, if I believe that he rejects the authority of Christ. But *I* feel clear and firm in my manner of saying this, because I know it is in accordance with Christ's will, though *he* does not. Christ gave the command as one not resting on arbitrary authority, but on eternal principles which are recognisable by the human heart—which ought to be recognised; and which men are morally guilty, more or less, for not recognising on the bare statement of them.

I know that pantheism occupies this ground; and I think that pantheism is, for the most part, sentimental trash, offering no distinct ground on which to rest, but only a cloud-floor, which gives way in temptation, before the present and substantial reality of what is pleasant. Nevertheless, I am no more afraid of a truth because pantheism has unrealised it, than I am of another because revolution has caricatured it into devilry. Nay, I am rather inclined to believe it the more firmly, because I see that even the false phantom of it

has had power to enchain so many human hearts. I believe in Juno's beauty all the more from Ixion's passionate admiration of a fog-likeness of her. Base coin is valued because the mint-stamped is gold. Besides, even pantheism itself has its true side. It seems to me to be the necessary reaction from the dreadful dead machinery of preceding conceptions. I think some pantheists are nearer the truth than most evangelicals. Many—most—make this world a machine, at a great distance from which a Superintendent sits, guiding and interfering, certainly, but totally disconnected in his own being and contact from the said machinery, which is in itself composed of quite base and gross materials. Now I believe that the pantheist is right in saying, there is something much more divine in God's universe than that. The life which pervades all is He in whom we live and move and have our being. The different gradations of life are more truly of the same divine essence than the hard material distinctions of common minds make them. The life of the plant, and the life of the animal, and of the intellect of man, are essentially allied to the higher life which theologically we call the divine life in the soul. And I believe that it will some day be demonstrated, that the Creator is much more closely united to His own works than our unspiritual conceptions represent Him. God is a Spirit—by which most people seem to mean a subtle, ethereal gas, imponderable, perhaps, but still not only substance, but matter besides, however attenuated. Now spirit is mind; and I do not know what is meant by the locality of mind, except by saying that the universe is localised Deity, and that the universe is everywhere—and everywhere, according to both psalmist and pantheist that which waxes old as doth a garment, folded and unfolded as a vesture, is changed—while He, the Former, in the form remains. The Church is 'the body,' of which Christ is the Spirit—the fulness of Him which filleth all in all. The universe, in a sense, is the body, of which God is the Spirit—the fulness of Him which filleth all in all—a

lower life, but God's life still. For this reason, I do not know how to 'keep language unequivocal.' The two passages I have quoted from St. Paul and from the Psalms are equivocal—pantheistic in their form—indeed, I suppose one was the language of a pantheist—admitted and adopted by St. Paul in that wondrous way of his which extracted the element of truth from everything rejecting the error. My statement above might come from a pantheist's lips; but I am no pantheist—I believe earnestly in God's personality—by which I mean consciousness, character, and will. Again, I could not say that to aim at the heart's excellences, without seeking the Spirit's agency, is a deep delusion and a dangerous dream. Surely Cornelius, and men like him, did so; and the earnestness of their aim brought that very conviction of a void which opened their souls for the reception of the Spirit. Surely, in every nation he that feareth God and worketh righteousness is on his way to God, whether he have heard 'if there be a Holy Ghost or not.' Surely this aim at heart-excellences is the baptism of John. Can we, without unrealising all moral convictions, lend ourselves for a moment to language which seems to say that good is not good, except it have added to it some incomprehensible element, which does not make those who boast of its possession visibly more noble and more heavenly than others, but often very much narrower and revoltingly conceited? In proportion as a man aims at excellence, will he find that there is a Spirit, not himself, but external to himself, which he does not seek, but which seeks him—just in that proportion will he be forced to look—not in, but up and out. Be good, change your lives—repent—aim at heart excellences—that seems to me the first thing to say and the first thing to feel. Then the doctrine of the Spirit comes not as a cut-and-dried dogma, but the interpretation in words of an external necessity of the soul.

I believe we agree; at all events, I am certain our hearts are one in God and Christ. Possibly my expressions are bad

and inadequate; but in proportion as I adore Christ (and I do think my whole soul thrills and trembles at the thought of Him, when I understand, or fancy I understand Him, and feel my own heart acquiescing in His life, and views of life and God, and acknowledging them to be revelations), exactly in that proportion do I abhor that which calls itself Evangelicalism. I feel more at brotherhood with a wronged, mistaken, maddened, sinful Chartist than I do with that religious world which has broken Popery into a hundred thousand fragments, and made every fragment an entire, new, infallible Pope—dealing out quietly and cold-bloodedly the flames of the next world upon all heretics who dispute their dictum, in compensation for the loss of the power which their ancestor, by spiritual descent, pleasingly exercised of dispensing the flames of this world. Luckily, the hope remains that they are not plenipotentiaries of the place with which they seem so familiar. More and more, day by day, one's soul feels itself alone with God, and resolved to listen for His voice alone in the deeps of the spirit.

XIX.

Feb. 4, 1848.

My dear Acworth,— . . . . I wish you would come down here some day. We have nothing, however, to show, except the sea. In many respects Brighton has the disadvantages of Cheltenham. It is excitable, and the floating portions of society are superficial. The voluntary system, too, is detestable, and cuts the mouth like a Mameluke bit, reminding a man of his servitude at every step. And I feel the wear and tear of heart and mind in having so constantly, and in so unassisted a way, to speak on solemn subjects. A man who is by profession bound to speak for present effect—for, except in the present, what can speaking do?—necessarily injures himself and his character. I do not mean in the way of popularity; for I find nothing seducing in that, and would gladly, joyously give it all up to-morrow for a calmer life; but I mean in the

destruction of repose, and the inability to see any truth in its quiet beauty. All proportions are distorted, and it becomes an everlasting race between one's own mind and itself.

I have no one thing to complain of here that I had in Cheltenham, except the excitement, and that is killing. But the utter hopelessness of being listened to is past. In outward success all looks well. Consequently, I work in good spirits. But Sunday night, Monday, and all Tuesday are days of wretched exhaustion—not despondency, but actual nervous pain. I do as little as I can; indeed, I cannot do less; but I begin to fear I shall never keep it up. Brighton air is wonderful; but even that fails.

XX.

Brighton: July 11, 1848.

. . . . I will tell you, however, seriously, one thing which seems to me now plain. Everyone is not now called upon to be a martyr for truth. It is perfectly true that whenever there is a great soul pouring out its utterances to the world, there will be a Calvary; but before we pour out our utterances, we should be quite sure that we are great souls, that the truth is one important enough to suffer for, and that the persons we speak to are worth the illumination, and not blind Pharisees, before whom Divine wisdom says, 'Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things.' These three rules save from much irritation, which exhausts and does no good, like a great horse kicking at flies, every kick covering him with sweat, and enough to break twenty men's legs. But flies are not men. The convulsive kick goes through the swarm innocuous, and back they buzz and hum again. You always get the worst of it when you kick at flies. Squash them, if you can, without more effort than a switching of the tail; if not, let them alone.

CHAPTER VI.

BRIGHTON—1849.

His Interest in all the Questions which agitated Society—Clairvoyance and Mesmerism—Speech at the Meeting for the 'Early Closing Association'—Opposition which was roused by his Preaching—Work, and hidden Life.

Letters from January 1849 to November 1850.

IT was in 1849 that Mr. Robertson's genius was most productive and most clear. The political and social disturbances of that year and its predecessor, the ferment which kept all society bubbling with excitement, communicated their ardour and their movement to his spirit. His heart throbbed in response to the music of the march of the world, always to him a martial music. He spoke and thought best when great events encompassed him. Whatever was agitating society, he took up either in the pulpit or on the platform, or in conversation with his friends. But before he gave a public opinion on any subject, he studied it with care. He did not argue blindly on the outside, but sought to attain the central point of a question, that he might see without confusion the different forms under which its idea had mani-

fested itself; and explain, by the analogies of its past, the course of its present development. In small things as well as great this was his method. In the beginning of 1849, Alexis, the well-known clairvoyant, came to Brighton. Mr. Robertson was invited to meet him at several *séances*. He refused at first, but afterwards going, found to his great delight, that in his presence there were no revelations. 'His want of faith,' said Alexis, dimmed the mesmeric vision. 'My close observation,' said Robertson, 'confused the charlatan.' He treated the matter half mirthfully, half seriously. He laughed, for he thought it a clever cheat. He frowned at the dishonour he believed to be offered by it to the calm and healthy verities of science and law. He was accustomed to mourn over the credulity which clairvoyance and its kindred induced, over the idleness they encouraged, the craving for excitement they created, and over the generation which, seeking after such signs, could not believe in the truth of Christ. The letters which follow exhibit partially these thoughts :—

January 1849.

I shall not be able to attend the *séance* to-morrow, as that old fox, ——, objects to the presence of anyone who is 'wide awake.' There is a very beautiful passage in Virgil's 'Æneid,' in which the ghost of Hector sadly appears to Æneas before the final ruin of Troy, and in a dignified way gives up all for lost. 'If Troy could have been saved by mortal arm, this right hand should have saved her.' . . . . That which the noble Trojan said of divine Troy, I now, in foiled and melancholy honesty, say of the divine senses of the celestial sex. Ah! well, it is only a specimen of what goes on in

affairs more important. The Father of Lies has it all his own way in this world—in small things as well as in great—and it is a piece of absurd knight-errantry to tilt against him. I sometimes am tempted to doubt whether anyone who tries to open people's eyes in science, politics, or religion, is to be reckoned as a sublime martyr or an egregious fool. The Cross, or the cap and bells? Certainly, had it not been for ONE, I should say, the cap and bells.

> Truths would you teach, or save a sinking land;
> All fear, none aid you, and few understand.

Why cannot sensible people see the mighty pigeon-plucking of this world without interfering? Why not let the Cagliostros finger diamond necklaces from queens, and Alexis dupe? What is truth? The path to the pillory of ridicule. What is the champion of truths, big or little? That poor foolish sylph that interposed to save Belinda's curl, and got cut in two by a paltry pair of scissors for his pains.

Now, can you believe that I could have sat down and wept to-day? Not simply to see that foolish scene, so grave and so ridiculous, but to connect it with all the analogy of life. It made me sick at heart to think of the futility of all attempts to tell people the whole of religious truth—to be brave, and true, and faithful. Let people go on in their old way; do not come into collision with foolish old views and superstitions! Say *out* the truths of God: and then what thanks do you get for bringing light to people who love darkness? which nine hundred and ninety-nine in the thousand do.

I think the best work that Signor R—— could consult would be Turton's 'Reply to Dr. Wiseman on the Eucharist.' It seems to me, however, that the surest way of arriving at correct views of this matter is to endeavour to enter into the mind of Christ, His tone of feeling, and the scope of His grand life. Transubstantiation then gradually withers from the conception as a contradiction to Christianity, which is a Spirit

and a Life. To localise it; to tie it in any way to the material; to bind it to 'days and months, and times and years;' to make it 'meat and drink;' to prevent its getting beyond the rudiments, that is, 'the alphabet of the world;' to make it 'subject to ordinances;' to make it anything but the worship of a spirit—God in spirit and in truth—is to go back to Judaism.

But I do not wonder at the belief in Transubstantiation; it only assumes the *fact* of a miracle, very possible in itself—a religious mistake, though a great one. But I do marvel at grown men believing in clairvoyance, and then refusing to listen to the argument for Transubstantiation. I met the other day a lady, thoughtful, independent, and candid, thoroughly inartificial and free from prejudice, who was completely converted into a devotee of the superstition of 1849. After which, I can comprehend that Transubstantiation should have been undoubted for a thousand years, annihilated at the end of that time, resuscitated, and that it should have in it a fair prospect of leading a vigorous existence of, say, another thousand of years.

The next subject which engrossed him, and which brought him prominently before the public, was the closing of shops in Brighton at an earlier hour than was customary. A meeting was called on April 24, 1849, by the Early Closing Association, and he was asked to speak. His speech was remarkable for its grasp of both sides of the question. He thought well of the plan proposed, but for that very reason was calm and sober in his tone, and determined to look in the face all the difficulties which environed the subject. He stood between the masters and the young men. He claimed for the former freedom from coercion; he

even spoke of the peculiar difficulties they would have in carrying out the views of the Association, owing to the number of strangers who came into Brighton at a late hour. He claimed for the latter their right, as men, to time for self-improvement, but he demanded that their leisure should be well employed. Then, with one of his rapid turns of thought, he showed to his audience of the higher classes, that it was not only those who sold, but those who bought, in whose hands the question lay.

It was a noble speech, full of economical knowledge, sober arguments, and wise prevision of difficulties. It is curious to find so imaginative and excitable a man keeping so steadily in the path of common sense. He pleased neither party: one thought his words too bold, the other thought them too lukewarm; but though his speech won few cheers, it made its impression afterwards, when the passions of men had cooled down to the reasoning-point.

During the rest of the year he made no public address, except from the pulpit, but from that place his influence radiated every day more powerfully. His chapel became crowded to the doors. His sermons grew more weighty and more eloquent. The two confirmation lectures preached this year, on Jacob's Wrestling and the Parable of the Sower, display the opulence of thought and care which he spent on the education of the young. It will be seen, however, from a letter, written to answer some objections made to his analysis of the despair and suicide of Judas, and subjoined to this

chapter No. XXI., that side by side with his influence, the opposition to his ministry increased and became more harassing. 'It is only too true,' he says, 'that the perpetual chafings and work of a place like Brighton have destroyed all claim to philosophic clearness, and that I am getting less fit for study and mental tension.' The officious support of some who got up addresses to him, and subscriptions for his portrait, and the vulgarising efforts of others who did the same on mercenary grounds, drew him into a prominence which pained him.

My enemies (he writes), not content with the usual modes open to snarlers, actually invade me in my castle; and on the strength of being religious, come with long faces, though perfect strangers, to warn me of the wrath in store for me hereafter, if I do not repent of my manifold heresies. So you see I am in a hornet's nest, and buffets only exhaust strength in vain, the amount of real good done being very problematical.

To hide himself from this public shadow of himself, he gave himself up to quiet and continuous work. He held a weekly lecture in his vestry for the poor; he visited among them; he endeavoured to draw around him the young men of Brighton belonging to that class which is so rarely touched by clergymen — the shopkeepers' assistants, the clerks; all those, in fact, whom his speech on the question of Early Closing had partially, by its sobriety, alienated from him. He shrank more and more into a hidden way of life, refused to publish his sermons, and kept, as much as possible,

apart from society. In a letter written to his mother, at the close of the year, he speaks of some unauthorised publication of one of his Advent lectures: —

The miserable publication of 'St. Paul's Novitiate,' as the printer calls it, was a libel—absurd, curtailed, and in some places absolutely false. Pray—pray let it be known that all these things are more or less misrepresentations, and done entirely without my sanction! It is of great importance that they should not appear, for I have abundance of slanderers—I cannot tell why, for I molest no one, abstain now even from public lectures, go out very little, and only ask to be left alone. I take no pains to contradict innumerable falsehoods, for it would be endless. I take my own path quietly, and never retaliate.

In the October of this year there began a long and voluminous correspondence with several persons, which has, most fortunately, been preserved. It will appear in its proper place. Meanwhile, the letters which follow include all that can be known of the history of his life during the first nine months of 1849: —

XXI.

1849.

My dear ——, I ought long ago to have replied to your kind request for a reply to the objections brought against my sermon on Acts i., but I have always felt a defence of my own views peculiarly irksome, as I am glad to escape the unpro-

gressive task of circling round anything which I have ever said or written.

I will briefly give you the replies which refute the charges of your friend's note.

First of all: my 'desire to be original, and going astray from the old paths.'

Whether I aim at an appearance of originality or not, God must judge, who alone has the right to scrutinise motives and impute them. As to originality, things which are very familiar to those whose reading is professional and varied, may appear new to those who chiefly seek the teaching and read the works of one school of theology. 'Old paths' require to be defined. That which is old now was new once, and treated with very great bitterness at first, as all new forms of truth are sure to be. Evangelicalism was called new-fangled fifty years ago. I presume that no one would maintain that the popular preaching of the present day is in the old paths, either of thought or phraseology, in which Jeremy Taylor or Bishop Andrews walked; or that they were not liable to the charge of novelty in their day, compared with the tone of thought and teaching prevalent in St. Bernard's; or that Bernard's preaching was not very, very different from that of Chrysostom's day. Nay, more—the Apostles—He himself—what was the charge against them, but that they did not walk in the old paths, but taught 'new doctrines'? Evangelicalism itself, worn threadbare as it is by trite thought—and certainly, to do it justice, guiltless of mental power or fresh thought, for the last ten years at least—what was it called in the days of Cecil and Scott? The 'good old' High Church talked loudly of new lights.

I am said to have 'apologised for Judas,' thereby falling into one of the various old and exploded errors of heterodox teachers, 'to which my desire of seeming original guides me.'

My 'apology' for Judas consisted in saying that his sin was not murder, but unbelief, and that he was sincere in what he

did; also that his temptation was Satanic, and that he is in hell.

I do not fancy that Judas would thank me much for my apology. We will examine this heterodox defence.

What I said was, in effect, this. The essential guilt of suicide is unbelief, that is, despair of God's love and goodness. Distrust is the sin of sins, which makes sin sin. Luther said strongly, but not too strongly, 'Nothing damns except unbelief.' My sermon, therefore, charged Judas with unbelief, final and desperate. I do not know what your correspondent thinks of the sinfulness of unbelief; but it is clear that he is very much shocked at a charge of murder being converted into one which only imputes unbelief: *only* unbelief!

I may, perhaps, add that the question, as to what is the essential guilt of suicide, is settled by the reply of Christ when the evil suggestion was presented to Him. He did not allege the Sixth Commandment, which He assuredly would have done had suicide been murder; but, 'Thou shalt not tempt' (i. e. try, make experiment of) 'the Lord thy God.' He treated it as a temptation, not to murder, but to distrust; which was exactly what I did, on His infallible authority.

I shall briefly dispose of the remaining objections.

Your correspondent is scandalised by the expression that Judas was sincere, and says, with a note of admiration, 'the sincerity of Judas, who betrayed his Master, bare the bag,' &c.

I did not say that Judas was sincere in his betrayal of Christ, nor in his stewardship of the common purse—I did not say that he was a sincere man. I simply said, he was sincere in his remorse. A thief may behave honestly sometimes. The unjust steward was commended by his lord. Yet I have heard of commentators of the Rationalistic school who were as much offended with the Bible as your friend is with me, because it commends a man who had tampered with his master's accounts. The Bible, however, commends him; and Christ puts him forth as a pattern to Christians, not because he had acted

honestly in all cases, but because he had done wisely in one. He who commended him as wise in that act, did not exactly say that his waste and duplicity were objects of admiration. And if I assert that Judas was sincere in his remorse, it requires some ingenuity to pervert this into an opinion that he was sincere in his kissing his Redeemer. The suicide of Judas *was* the act of a man sincere, even to agony, in his remorse. Did he *pretend* to cast down the gold? Did he *pretend* the pangs which drove him to despair? I say, further, all suicide is sincere. I stated that for the express purpose of showing that sincerity does not make the matter better, and that remorse is not penitence. Your correspondent, without having heard the sermon, hears of a detached expression, and *charitably* assumes that it was part of the 'apology' for Judas. It formed, in fact, part of the demolition of a supposed apology that might be made for him.

Again: 'Where does Scripture speak of Judas not working out his destiny, by which he was as truly destined to salvation as any other of the apostles, but that his destiny crushed him?'

I reply: Everyone has a mission in this world to accomplish. That is the destiny given him to work out. Judas had such a mission. God had appointed him to salvation by His call as truly as the other apostles, unless we are prepared to believe that the Eternal Love predestines to sin. He had a 'ministry and apostleship from which he by transgression fell.' Judas was sent into the world to work out his own salvation with fear and trembling. God 'did not will the sinner's death.' Surely, surely the Bible is plain enough on that point. But Judas would not accept his mission, and then that which was given in blessing turned to curse. His destiny crushed him; he went to his *own* place, the place he had prepared for himself, not the place prepared by God. So it is with you and me. No decree of God has insured our misery. All things work together for good to those who love God. But

the same things work together for evil if they do not love God. The sailor who yields to and works with the winds of God is brought by them to the haven where he would be; but if he try to beat up against them, the very gale that was carrying him to safety overwhelms him; he is crushed by the very destiny that was working out his salvation. All I said on this point was simply expository of the sentence, 'He went to his own place.'

I think you told me there was a feeling of condemnation for the use of the word *courage* in connection with the act of Judas. Suicide implies physical courage. There is a higher courage, which I distinctly contrasted with this animal daring, which enables a man quietly and bravely to endure the weariness of this heavy life, obloquy, and hatred. He who has that is safe, as I then said, from suicide; and it was to contrast it with this, that I admitted the other courage which belongs to the suicide.

And to deny this is surely absurd. I do not reckon physical courage very high; but still I do not think there are many gentlemen in Brighton who are men enough to stab themselves, if all religion were out of the question. If it seem a very easy thing to inflict a deathblow on self, perhaps they might come to some conclusion on the point, if they will only try to bind up their own arms, and use the lancet next time it is wanted. This objection is so weak, that I can scarcely speak of it with gravity.

Lastly, your friend asks, 'When does Scripture mention the least impatience or any sin in the man Christ Jesus?' and then goes on to speak, with great horror, of my 'awful notion' of admitting the germ of evil, &c. in Him.

I presume this is a misconception of an expression which I have more than once used. Specially dwelling on the Redeemer's sinlessness, I have shown how all the innocent feelings of our nature were in Him, but stopped on the verge which separates the innocent from the wrong. An inclination

of human nature is not wrong—hunger, anger—but being gratified unduly, or in forbidden circumstances, it passes into sin. 'Be ye angry, and sin not.' Legitimate anger was to stop short of sinful vindictiveness.

Similarly, Our Lord felt the weariness of life, and was anxious to have it done, amidst perpetual opposition of enemies and misconception of friends. 'How am I straitened till it be accomplished?' 'O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you?'

There was no germ of sin in Christ; for sin is the acting of an evil will. Sin resides in the will, not in the natural appetitions. There was no germ of sin in Him; but there were germs of feeling, natural and innocent, which show that He was in all points tempted like as we are.

If I say to a man who is angrily calling Mr. Smith O'Brien a felon, 'You mistake; it is not felony, but treason, he is guilty of,' I have not defended the poor man much by saying he is a traitor instead of a felon—I have simply vindicated the right use of words. If I say Judas' guilt was not murder, but final and fatal despair, and call it, as I remember well I did, the sin of sins, it is somewhat difficult to make me out as an apologist for suicide.

So much for the apology of Judas.

Certainly, there is an exploded heterodox defence of him with which I am acquainted. It was held that not from avarice, but from a desire to force on the acknowledgment of his Master's mission, he betrayed Him. Your correspondent seems to fancy I have adopted this. Mr. M'Neile, no oracle of mine, but a very good man, and high in the Evangelical world, adopted it, and printed the sermon; but his orthodoxy remains unimpeached: nor has he been accused, so far as I know, of affecting novelty, absurd as the view is. But this is the happy fate of all party-men.

Further, however, I said that Judas went to his own place—a very emphatic expression. I said the soul gravitated down-

wards. The sin which led to suicide led to hell; but it was his own place, in the way of natural retribution, not of arbitrary reprobation. This was another feature in the apology for Judas. I left him in hell. What more would they have? Only an unbeliever!—only in hell!

Now, with regard to the propriety of the assertion that the sin was despair, not murder,—

Your correspondent says, 'Where does Scripture draw a distinction between killing and murder?' The only reason in Scripture for the heinousness of the crime is *not* that it involves hatred and malice, but that 'in the image of God created He man.'

All through the Book of Leviticus a distinction is drawn between killing and murder—all through the Bible. To kill is to take away life; to murder is to kill with malice prepense. The soldier kills, so does the executioner, so does the man who acts under sudden and dreadful provocation, so does the man who acts in self-defence, so does the duellist, so does the man who treasures up a wrong for years. In every one of these the image of God, wherein He made man, is destroyed. Is there no distinction between them? They are all killing; are they all murder? Is it just to brand the guilt of a man, or rather the act of a man, who shoots a footpad demanding his purse with menaces, with the same name as is appropriated to the act of Rush? You may get one rude generic name, like murder, to include a vast number of offences, just as the generic name Animal includes man and zoophytes, with endless intermediate gradations. But it is only a very rude way of talking. And a man scarcely differs from a zoophyte more than the suicide, which has no hatred in it and no malice, does from the murder, which is one of revenge. It is only loosely that we call suicide self-murder; well enough for popular conversation, but utterly unfit for the expression of accurate thought.

All this comes from the loose way in which people think of

sin, and the unmeaning way in which they, therefore, talk of the sinlessness of the man Christ Jesus. They forget that He *suffered* being tempted. In point of fact, they deny, without intending it, all that makes His sinlessness sublime and real. They reduce that glorious Heart to a mere machine, and make His life a theatrical exhibition, in which fictitious struggles and sorrows went on. He only *pretended* to struggle with temptation! It really would appear, according to them, that He did not actually *suffer* in putting down the inclination which arose spontaneously and innocently.

However, this is a very large subject, and I cannot go into it.

The insinuation of 'German neology' is a comprehensive and very convenient charge by which all earnest thought is tabooed at the present day. It is quite enough to hint that it is German. So at the time of the Reformation they spoke of Greek and Hebrew. 'Greek,' said a Roman Catholic priest, 'is a new language, just discovered, and full of heresies. As for the Hebrew language, all who study that become Jews immediately.' So they speak of German now. Englishmen seem to think that the Redeemer died exclusively for them, and that light shines nowhere but here. Sixty millions of God's creatures speak German, and can only get their theology in that. Alas! for those who have not the English theology, though it be, unfortunately, only a feeble echo of that which, in its freshness, came from Germany three hundred years ago. 'Verily, we English are the men; and truth shall die with us.' But the singular part of this charge is, that they who make it know so little of the matter, that, like your correspondent, they are not even aware that the present heterodoxy of Germany is not neologian, and that neologianism is exploded even there. To them, neology, rationalism, mysticism, mythicism, pantheism, all mean pretty much the same thing; and one charge is nearly as good as another, because all are vague and mysterious, like the venerable fee-fi-fo-fum of our childhood.

To live by trust in God—to do and say the right because it is lovely—to dare to gaze on the splendour of the naked truth, without putting a false veil before it to terrify children and old women by mystery and vagueness—to live by love, and not by fear, that is the life of a true, brave man, who will take Christ and His mind for the Truth, instead of the clamour of either the worldly world or the religious world: between which two, alas! there is as little difference now as in the days of Pharisaism; or rather, if there be any difference, we know who said that the 'world' of sinners was, as knowing its blindness, rather in the less danger of the two.

The chief difference between the two views of suicide is this: the one says Hell, and something worse, if you dare to murder yourself. I would rather say, Trust God, and believe in Him as Love, and suicide is impossible. If the other argument were the only thing that could save us from fifty suicides a day, I would not use it: for the goodness which is only produced by fear is no goodness at all. I quite agree, with every fibre of my heart responding, with the sentiment of that noble thinker Milton: 'Were I the chooser, a dram of well-doing should be preferred before many times as much the forcible hindrance of evil-doing. For God, sure, esteems the growth and completion of one virtuous person more than the restraint of ten vicious.'

I believe that the great lesson for us to learn—every day it seems more true to me—is this: God and my own soul; there is nothing else in this world I will trust to for the truth. To those alone we are amenable for judgment—to Him and to His voice within us. From all else we must appeal. Only we must not appeal so haughtily as we are sometimes tempted to do—as, perhaps, I have done on this present occasion—in independence, but not in pride.

XXII.

9 Montpelier Terrace, Brighton: March 29, 1849.

My dear ——,—I will most willingly comply with your request, difficult as it is; for how difficult to express another's feelings! and besides, in a public inscription, as little of private feeling as can be profaned, the better. But will you tell me a little more precisely what you wish? You use the word poet. Do you wish a prose or a verse inscription? For your sake, or your sister's, I would do either; but I think the latter would certainly prove a failure—and is it desirable?

I have never spoken or written a syllable to you about our dear lost William, because I cannot. Every year I feel less inclined than I once was to get upon subjects of the deepest interest. Every year I feel that utterance profanes feeling, and makes it commonplace. He is gone—with all his fresh, bright, marvellous flow of happiness. What is there more to be said than is contained in those dreadful words—He is gone? How often I have thought of the evening he left Tours, when, in our boyish friendship, we set our little silver watches exactly together, and made a compact to look at the moon exactly at the same moment that night, and think of each other! I do not remember a single hour in life since then which I would have arrested, and said, Let this stay. And to William all was so bright and hopeful! Only now and then, the shadow projected by the more solemn and sombre aspect of the Future seemed to rest upon his heart—even that was transient. I have sympathised with you often in secret, dear ——; but for him, I see nothing in his lot that is not a subject for envy. Why should we wish him to have remained a little longer?—to have been slashed or mangled in obedience to the orders of some . . . and then to be lost among the names of the innumerable gallant hearts that are made clay of to satisfy the cupidity of East India merchants? Oh no! better, surely, as it is. And as to the eternal question. We

know of him—what is all that we can ever know of anyone removed beyond the veil which shelters the unseen from the pryings of curiosity—that he is in the hands of the Wise and Loving. Spirit has mingled with spirit. A child, more or less erring, has gone home. Unloved by his Father? Believe it who may, that will not I.

XXIII.

February 22, 1849.

My dear Friend,—I send you the volume of Wordsworth, which you forgot last night. One must not be too young, either in heart or years, to lie entirely open to his influence.

I fancy character may be measured, both in depth and quality, by the poet who is the chosen favourite. He is a kind of *Nilometer* to mark the depth at different distances on the river. A man's *Nilometer*, in the higher regions, may be Shelley. The wild and marvellous stream is then still in the air region, finding a home among clouds, cutting a narrow way through clefts of rock, flowing for many hundred yards together under frozen patches of snow—a strange and beautiful life in the waste of the eternal silence, issuing out clear and pure and cold a little higher up, from the delicately blue cavern of the glacier. Even in its lower and earthier flow, the stream will appear to hold mysterious connection, as if by invisible sympathy, with its source, and even the inarticulate murmurs of its daily ripples will seem but the cadences which ought to be heard only in those still and solemn realms.

Down in the plains, in the less unearthly part of its course, the water-mark of such a man will stand at Burns. A strong, swift flow, so deep as to scarcely seem to move on the surface; somewhat turbid, but the very earth which discolours it will often be purer than the snow which falls into other rivers direct from the cloud of Heaven.

Between these two regions of such a man's life, Wordsworth will mark the height and temperature of the stream in a part of its course which will be at present invisible—being lost, as is the case with some rivers, for many miles underground. But when this lost power of life shall reappear, Wordsworth will only mark the depth and temperature near the banks. The central depths he will not be able to sound.

XXIV.

February 26.

I have been reading the sermon or essay I sent you, to find in it some clue to the tone of your note, and in vain—in vain, at least, so far as a legitimate clue is concerned. For surely you have misinterpreted its meaning if you think it says that the spirit of Humanity is to be stilled into silence, that the diviner impulses may start to their supremacy? We do not reach spirituality of character by spasmodic, unnatural efforts to crush the nature that is within us, but by slow and patient care to develope and disengage it from its evil. It is not angelic, but human excellence at which we are to aim; nor can we 'be perfect as our Father is perfect' except in our degree. 'Every man in his own order.' To become saints, we must not cease to be men and women.

> For man is not as God,
> But then most God-like, being most a man.

And if there be any part of our nature which is essentially human, and to effect the excision of which would destroy its humanity, it is the craving for sympathy. The Perfect One gave sympathy and wanted it. Gave it, as every page will show; wanted it—'Could ye not watch with me one hour?' 'Will ye also go away?' 'Simon, the son of Jonas, lovest thou me?' Found it, surely, even though his brethren believed not in him—found it in John, and Martha, and Mary, and Lazarus.

Though some of the following letters belong to 1850, it has been considered better, for an obvious reason, to throw them all together: —

XXV.

October 1849.

I do not read the Fathers. I know their system pretty well, I believe, from having examined with great interest their advocates' and their opponents' writings; and I am sensible of the healing effect produced by such a system on the mind of those who accept it. Nay, I even know that their errors are but forms of truths which lie beneath them; false forms, which yet convey spiritual truth to those who do not know or suspect the falsehood of the form. The misfortune is, that I am certain they are false—as false as Romanism—though even in that system mariolatry and purgatory are material and gross statements of spiritual facts, which I think our systems neglect. But then I cannot by an act of volition receive a system for the sake of the comfort which I know to be to *me* a lie. It is at my peril that I thus falsify my inmost nature, and consent to be deluded by a figment. To those to whom it is not a lie, I do not dispute—nay, I cordially, and, I hope, charitably, believe—that the system may be elevating, purifying, life-giving; but I had rather stand alone in a waste howling wilderness, tempted by Satan, and conscious of having stripped myself of all unreality, than accept the happiest consolation that the more inhabited world could give me.

XXVI.

May 1850.

Do you believe in God? Dare you not trust yourself like a child to Him? Oh, what is your baptism worth if it has not taught you that blessed central truth of all—that He is your

Father? Dare you so stifle His voice in your soul, which comes in the simple rushings of earnest thought, and then call it conscience? Are you sure that you may not be shutting out a ray from heaven, although you fear that it is a meteor from hell? . . . I tried no arguments against Romanism, for I feel that Romanism is only an infinitely small and sensualistic embodiment of truths—a living human form shrunk into a mummy—with every feature there hideously like life, especially when it, by force applied from without, by wires or galvanism, moves humanly. . . . . God made the soul to correspond with truth. Truth is its own evidence, as the lightning-flash is, as the blessed sunlight is. . . . . Alas! alas! you do not believe that you have a soul—you do not believe in God—you do not believe that His spirit can find your soul—you believe in the dial, and not in the sun—you dare not be alone with Christ—you do not feel the solitary yet humbling grandeur of being in this vast universe alone as He was, with your Father. His life is not the pattern of your life, and His divine humanity is not the interpretation of the mysteries of your solitary being. You cannot walk the valley of the shadow of death fearlessly, as David did, because 'Thou art with me.' You must have a crowd of —— and a number of other good men by some hundred thousands to assure you that you are not alone. All this universe is God's blessed sacrament, the channel of His Spirit to your soul, whereof He has selected two things as types of all the rest: the commonest of all elements, water, and the commonest of all meals, a supper, and you cannot find Him except in seven! Too many, or else too few; but even in that protest against the Protestant limitation of grace to two channels I recognise a truth, only distorted and petrified as usual.

Oh, be brave and wait! These are dark days—lonely days—and our unbelieving impatience cannot bear to wait, but must rashly, and by impetuous steps of our own, plunge after the *ignis fatuus* of light. Peace at once! Light at once!

I cannot wait my time, and I will not! I do not say all this as one who is utterly unable to comprehend 'the delusion of people who cannot be content with the sound and excellent principles of our incomparable liturgy.' I only comprehend too well the struggles and the agonies of a soul that craves light and cannot find it. And as to our 'incomparable Church,' why it does not require a prophetic spirit to see that in ten years more she must be in fragments, out of which fragments God will reconstruct something for which I am content to wait, in accordance with His usual plan, which is to be for ever evolving fresh forms of life out of dissolution and decay. If not in my time, why then still I wait. I am alone now, and shall be till I die, and I am not afraid to be alone in the majesty of darkness which His presence peoples with a crowd. I ask now no sympathy but His. If He should vouchsafe to give me more I shall accept it gratefully; but I am content to do without it, as many of His best and bravest must do now.

Why cannot you live with Him? . . . .

I have no superstitious evangelical horror of Romanism, but——Alas! alas! for the substitution of an artificial, *created* conscience for the sound and healthy one of humanity, whose tides are distinct and unmistakeable in their noble music, like those of nature's ocean in its irresistible swell!

XXVII.

November 25, 1850.

Till to-day I did not know of your loss, which, it seems, is now no longer a fresh grief, so swiftly does time pass. No, God and time are the only cures for sorrow, and they do cure. I feel that the blest are the dead. To live is unvaried trial. . . . . Your last letter seemed to breathe a misgiving about the constancy of my trust and friendship, in consequence of your change. You need not doubt: I wish you had taken a more daring, braver, and truthful course. I wish you had

dared to live alone with God for a few years. I believe that you will not find peace long in Rome. But the fact of your being there does not alter my feeling towards you in one iota. Beneath, far beneath all forms of the sight and feeling, I joyfully recognise the unity of that spirit which forms the basis of all true lives. At bottom we mean—all good minds mean —substantially the same thing; and I look forward more and more yearningly to the day when we shall see this, as well as take it for granted. For yourself I am in less apprehension; for I know that if you are spared, you will not die a member of the Church of Rome.

XXVIII.

I am where I was, gathering fresh accretions round the nucleus of truth; I hold surer every day that my soul and God seek each other, and am utterly fearless of the issue. I am but 'an infant crying in the dark, and with no language but a cry;' nevertheless I am not afraid of the dark. It is the grand awful mystery! but God is in it, the light of the darkest night.

I am alone, lonelier than ever—sympathised with by none, because I sympathise too much with all. But the All sympathises with me. I have almost done with divinity—dogmatic divinity, that is—except to lovingly endeavour to make out the truth which lies beneath this or that poor dogma, miserably overlaid as marble fonts are with whitewash . . .

I read Shakspeare, Wordsworth, Tennyson, Coleridge, Philip Van Artevelde, for views of man to meditate upon, instead of theological caricatures of humanity; and I go out into the country to *feel* God; dabble in chemistry, to feel awe of Him; read the life of Christ, to understand, love, and adore Him; and my experience is closing into this, that I turn with disgust from everything to Christ. I think I get glimpses into His mind, and I am sure that I love Him more and more. . . . . A sublime feeling of a Presence comes upon me at times, which makes inward solitariness a trifle to talk about.

CHAPTER VII.

Letters of Mr. Robertson—Complexity of his Character—His Sensitiveness—His Knowledge of Men—His Life in Society—Effect of Climate upon him—Exquisite Perception of Natural Scenery—Impressions received from Art, and how he used them—Appreciation of Poetry—Intensity of Enthusiasm and of Indignation—His Eloquence and its Characteristics—Hatred of the Reputation of a 'Popular Preacher'—The natural Morbidity and the dangerous Tendencies of his Character—The means he employed to conquer them—His noble Truth and Self-devotion—Causes of the Gloom which appears in his Letters.

Letters, August and September 1849.

IT was in this year, 1849, that Mr. Robertson became the constant correspondent of several persons. From henceforth the account of his outward and his inward life is so largely given by himself, that a biographer has fortunately but little to say. But the letters and extracts of letters need in some sort a preface, for many of them are so peculiar, and even startling, from their extremely passionate expressions and morbid excitement, that doubts have been entertained as to the advisability of publishing them. But if they had been kept back, so much of the real essence of the man, so much of that which was most distinctive in him, would be left undisclosed, that no *true* conception of his character and of his genius would be possible. The extreme complexity of that character, a complexity

which naturally accompanied its great powers, will always render it liable to be mistaken. Apparent contradictions, apparent inconsistencies, strange minglings of strength and weakness, continually arise before us, as we read his letters. It would be possible to give to the world a picture of him the harmonies of whose colours would be easily seen by all; but it would not be a true picture. The picture painted in these letters is difficult to comprehend, and the harmonies of its colours are subtly and perplexedly involved. Many will not understand it, and not understanding will misrepresent it; but to those who can find the key, it will be as varied and interesting as it is full of teaching.

The root of all that was peculiar in Mr. Robertson's character and correspondence lay in the intense sensitiveness which pervaded his whole nature. His senses, his passions, his imagination, his conscience, his spirit, were so delicately wrought, that they thrilled and vibrated to the slightest touch. His great power of sympathy arose out of this sensitiveness.

My misfortune or happiness (he says) is power of sympathy. I can feel with the Brahmin, the Pantheist, the Stoic, the Platonist, the Transcendentalist, perhaps the Epicurean. At least, I feel the side of Utilitarianism which seems like truth, though I have more antipathy to it than anything else. I can suffer with the Tractarian, tenderly shrinking from the gulf blackening before him, as a frightened child runs back to its mother from the dark, afraid to be alone in the fearful loneliness; and I can also agonise with the infidels, recoiling from the cowardice and false rest of superstition. Many men can feel each of these separately, and they are happy. They go on

straightforward, like a one-eyed horse, seeing all clear on one side. But I feel them all at once, and so far I am *allseitig, ein ganzer Mann.* But I am not such in this sense, that I can harmonise them all; I can only feel them. For this greatness there must be an all-feeling heart, together with an all-seeing eye. This world and its inner music is like a perfect band. Each instrument, alone, is harsh, incomplete; all together are harmony. The world is a full concert: he who hears only one tone, hears imperfectly: he who hears all separately, hears out of tune, discordantly, and confusedly: he only understands the universe who can hear all or most at once. So also with sight. To a perfect vision the impression on two retinas is felt as only one.

Yet there is comfort in this thought. To feel all separately is one step towards feeling all harmoniously. So a town begun in different parts, as Munich, is painful to look at. In years or centuries it will form one whole. Or a country whose railway plans are only partially executed is unpleasant to journey over, for you are perpetually interrupted in your travels. Yet the time is coming when it shall be a perfect network, and every detached bit shall help to connect the rest, and communication with every part shall be had. So I feel as much as I can. I will get every kind of *Bewusstsein.* They will harmonise at last.

His knowledge of men was also due to his sensitive sympathy. He seemed to feel by it, as if by a sixth sense, the character of those with whom he came into contact. It was not through knowledge of the world, nor through reasoning on the actions of men, that he recognised what they were. He felt them. Hence he had a very strange and great power. He almost always felt in the presence of others, not his own feelings, but theirs. He identified himself with them for a time.

He was thus enabled to reveal men to themselves, to tell them what their life meant, and how to idealise it and to ennoble it; to draw out in them what was best and highest; and all this with a gracious tact, due also to his sensitiveness, which seldom did too little and never went too far. Thus he had pre-eminently the gift of governing the hearts of men; and it is high and deserved praise to say of him, that the two great dangers which beset this gift, the danger lest the power of governing should be degraded into the lust of dominion—the danger lest the desire of retaining that power should end in truckling to men, or in suppression of the truth through fear of giving offence—were always by him avoided and abhorred.

His sensitiveness followed him into society, and constituted his pleasure and his pain. He was easily jarred; but when in tune with those around him, when in the company of those he loved and trusted, the harmony of his nature imparted itself to all around him. In his happier moods he was as radiant as a child: he joined with a fascinating cheerfulness in the games and merriment of young people; it seemed a relief to him to throw off with them the whole burden of life, and to forget the sorrow and disappointment with which his career was beset. His whole being blossomed under the sunshine of love and comprehension: in such society he diffused peace, and drew out from each all that was best and purest; but where he felt that he was suspected and misunderstood, he would often sit silent for the whole evening.

The aspect of outward nature, which was society to him, affected him in a like manner. He basked and seemed to live more vividly in broad sunshine. On the other hand, when his nervousness had increased from the pressure of disease, it made all the difference between rapidity of thought, ease of arrangement of his subject, and laborious failure, whether he wrote in a room which faced to the south or north. At that time, and in a lesser degree always, a gloomy day influenced him like a misfortune, and an ugly, inharmonious colour brought on nervous irritation.

He had therefore an exquisite perception of natural scenery. Those who have heard his sermons will remember how often and delightedly he spoke of the sunsets at Brighton: not indulging in vague description, but, with the artist's power of seeing, italicising, as it were, the essential and characteristic points of form and colour in the clouds and sky. His wanderings in the Tyrol and Switzerland were never forgotten. Certain scenes, especially, seem to have been engraved upon his memory. There is a vivid description of one of these in one of his lectures upon Poetry which is worth quoting: —

I wish I could describe one scene which is passing before my memory at this moment, when I found myself alone in a solitary valley in the Alps, without a guide, and a thunderstorm coming on: I wish I could explain how every circumstance combined to produce the same feeling, and ministered to unity of impression: the slow wild wreathing of the vapour round the peaks, concealing their summits, and imparting in

semblance their own motion, till each dark mountain-form seemed to be mysterious and alive; the eagle-like plunge of the lammergeier, the bearded vulture of the Alps; the rising of the flock of choughs, which I had surprised at their feast on carrion, with their red beaks and legs, and their wild shrill cries startling the solitude and silence, till the blue lightning streamed at last, and the shattering thunders crashed as if the mountains must give way. And then came the feelings which in their fulness man can feel but once in life: mingled sensations of awe and triumph, and defiance of danger—pride, rapture, contempt of pain, humbleness, and intense repose, as if all the strife and struggle of the elements were only uttering the unrest of man's bosom: so that in all such scenes there is a feeling of relief, and he is tempted to cry out exultingly, There! there! All this was in my heart, and it was never said out until now.

Here the accurate delineation of the outward scene and the immediate combination of it with the mental analogue to it in his own mind, are peculiarly characteristic of his genius. He moralised Nature, not wilfully, but unconsciously. Phenomena lay in his brain as pictures upon sensitive paper, till thought seized on them as illustrations; and in proportion to the vividness with which the impression had been received, was the clearness and concinnity of the thought and its illustration. Nothing can be better, e. g. than the comparison of the invisible church existing in the idea of God, and the visible church mixed with human infirmity and sin, to the Rhone as it issues purple and clear from the Lake of Geneva, and the same river discoloured after its junction with the Arve.

The same sensitiveness regulated the effect of art upon him. He had no ear for music; but, in certain states of feeling, beautiful sound—only as beautiful sound, not as scientific music—made his mind creative, and lingered so upon his ear that he could not sleep at night. His love of paintings and sculpture arose not so much from the education of the connoisseur, as from the feelings they awakened. He allowed a picture to produce its influence upon him, without, at least at first, an active exercise of his own mind upon the picture. His was the 'wise passiveness' which allowed the spirit of the work to have its own way with him before he began to criticise. Two illustrations of this will be found in his lectures on Poetry: one, a Madonna at Blenheim, which he 'could not gaze upon without being conscious of a calming influence;' the other, a print of a dying camel in the desert, anticipating in despair its doom from the vultures. 'You cannot look at the print,' he says, 'without a vivid sense and conception of despair. You go through street after street before the impression ceases to haunt you.'

The impressions thus received he retained. He had not, on their reception, 'hooked them to some useful end,' and so destroyed their freshness and universality. Afterwards they came in naturally and freely, as illustrations of ideas and assistance to thought, and, as was often the case, in different connections and with different meanings. In art, as in other things, he grasped the spirit and scorned the letter. Hence there was a

freedom of usage possible to him, which could not belong to the mere critic who had settled the purport of the picture, and so limited its meaning. He was one of the first to recognise the genius displayed in the early efforts of the pre-Raphaelites. When most persons saw only the crude, hard colouring, the ungracious outlines, and the startling way in which features were represented, as if they were seen through a magnifying-glass, he felt at once the power and the truth in the new School of Art, and prophesied its future influence and excellence.

The same principle belongs to his appreciation of poetry. He allowed it to make its own impression. Delicacy of passion and subtlety of feeling made that impression indelible. Presenting his heart in passiveness thus to receive, it was in his power to gain many diverse ideas from the same portion of any poem, the diversity depending on his state of health or mind at the time. The impressions and ideas thus received he then assumed lordship over, and used them as it pleased him. He brought intellect to bear upon them, and became the student and the critic. Thus he relates in his letters, that late one night he was reading the murder scene in 'Macbeth;' and it arose so vividly before his imagination, that he went upstairs to bed with almost the very dread which Macbeth had in his own heart, and was obliged to go back again, to prove to himself that he was not a child afraid of its own shadow. It was easy to see that out of such a strong realisation as this, was born the power which produced

his critical explanation of that very scene in his lecture upon Poetry. He had been himself Macbeth. When he divided himself from that experience, he looked back to it, and argued upon it.

Hence it was also a unique pleasure to hear him read poetry. 'No one,' says one of his friends, 'ever interpreted more musically the rhythm, or with more appreciation the beauties, of a poet.' But he seldom read aloud; he required to feel that those who listened, listened with the heart.

In the same way as he felt Art, he felt the thoughts of books and men, with an acuteness prophetic of brain-disease. The pleasure he received on hearing of a noble act was so keen, that it bordered upon pain. Men still recall the deep, almost stern, enthusiasm of joy with which he spoke of the great obedience of the soldiers who died in the wreck of the 'Birkenhead'; and the tones of his voice when he described the cry of the Hungarian nobles, 'Let us die for our king, Maria Theresa!' The indignation, on the other hand, with which he heard of a base act, was so intense that it rendered him sleepless. His wrath was terrible, and it did not evaporate in words. But it was Christ-like indignation. With those who were weak, crushed with remorse, fallen, his compassion, longsuffering, and tenderness were as beautiful as they were unfailing. But falsehood, hypocrisy, the sin of the strong against the weak, stirred him to the very depths of his being. 'I have seen him,' writes one of his friends, 'grind his teeth and clench his fist when passing a man who,

he knew, was bent on destroying an innocent girl.' 'My blood,' he writes himself, after a conversation on the wrongs of women, 'was running liquid fire.'

From all this arose his eloquence and its power. His mind was crowded with images which he had received and arranged in an harmonious order. With these he lit up the subjects of his speech, flashing upon abstruse points the ray of an illustration, and that with a fulness of apt words, and with, at the same time, a reticence, which did not swamp the point in the illustration.

He had also an extraordinary power of expression and arrangement. This belonged to him partly from the sensitiveness of his ear to rhythm—for, like many who have no ear for music, he was acutely conscious of the melody of ordered words—and partly from the sensitiveness of his imagination and of his intellect: the imagination unsatisfied, unless it had grasped the heart of the thought; the intellect unsatisfied, unless it had cut, polished, and placed in the finest setting, the diamond of the thought. To such a degree is this true, that even where the form of a sentence seems to be faulty, its force is often lost if the words be transposed. 'I cared almost as much for the *form*,' writes one, 'as for the substance of what he said, and often asked him, "You said so and so; tell me how you put it? This he could not endure."'

So entirely was his heart in his words, that, in public speaking especially, he lost sight of everything but his subject. His self-consciousness vanished. He did not

choose his words, or think about his thoughts. He not only possessed, but was possessed by, his idea; and when all was over, and the reaction came, he had forgotten, like a dream, words, illustrations, almost everything. It was always as great a mental exertion to recall as to think out a sermon; and he was frequently unable, if he waited till Monday, to write out the notes of what he had delivered on Sunday, unless it had been partially written beforehand. After some of his most earnest and passionate utterances, he has said to a friend, 'Have I made a fool of myself?'

But though he was carried away by his subject, he was sufficiently lord over his own excitement to prevent any loud or unseemly demonstration of it: he never transgressed the boundaries of what is called pulpit modesty. If the most conquering eloquence for the English people be that of the man who is all but mastered by his excitement, but who, at the very point of being mastered, masters himself—apparently cool, while he is at a white heat—so as to make the audience glow with the fire, and at the same time respect the self-possessed power of the orator—the man being always felt as greater than the man's feelings; if that be the eloquence which most tells upon the English nation, he had that eloquence. He spoke under tremendous excitement, but it was excitement reined in by will. He held in his hand, when he began his sermon, a small slip of paper, with a few notes upon it. He referred to it now and then; but before ten minutes had gone by, it was crushed to uselessness in his grasp;

for he knit his fingers together over it, as he knit his words over his thought. His gesture was subdued: sometimes a slow motion of his hand upwards; sometimes bending forward, his hand drooping over the pulpit; sometimes erecting himself to his full height with a sudden motion, as if upraised by the power of the thought he spoke. His voice—a musical, low, clear, penetrative voice—seldom rose; and when it did, it was in a deep volume of sound, which was not loud, but toned like a great bell. It thrilled, also, but that was not so much from feeling as from the repression of feeling. Towards the end of his ministry he was wont to stand almost motionlessly erect in the pulpit, with his hands loosely lying by his sides or grasping his gown; his pale, thin face, and tall, emaciated form, seeming, as he spoke, to be glowing as alabaster glows when lit up by an inward fire. ' And, indeed, brain and heart were on fire. He was being self-consumed. Every sermon in those latter days burnt up a portion of his vital power. Weakness of body made him more excitable, and every excitement made him weaker.

But his eloquence was not only the eloquence of apt expression, of apt illustration, and of excited feeling: it was also the eloquence of thought. He united, in a rare combination, imaginative with dialectic power. He felt a truth before he proved it; but when once it had been felt, then his logical power came into play. He disentangled it from the crowd of images and thoughts which clustered round it. He exercised a serene choice over this crowd, and rejected what was

superabundant. There was no confusion in his mind. Step by step he led his hearers from point to point, till, at last, he placed them on the summit, whence they could see all the landscape of his subject in harmonious and connected order. He hated an isolated thought. He was not happy till he had ranged it under a principle. Once there, it was found to be linked to a thousand others. Hence arose his affluence of ideas; his ability for seizing remote analogies; his wide grasp and his lucid arrangement of his subject; his power of making it, if abstruse, clear; if common, great; if great, not too great for human nature's daily food. For he was not only a thinker, but the thinker for Man. All thought he directed to human ends. Far above his keenness of sympathy for the true and beautiful was his sympathy for the true and beautiful in union with living hearts. He strove always fervently to make the ideal real by connecting it with humanity.

In connection with this power of eloquence was his recoil from its results. When he fancied that he was expected to shine, he would relapse into the most icy reserve. He seldom talked much in general society. He never seemed to have any feeling of superiority.

Unless elicited (writes a friend)—and that was done with difficulty—no one could have guessed the mass of information on all subjects which lay beneath that playful and quiet exterior, but nothing could be more brilliant and magical than the flow of ideas when they did come. He would go on uninterruptedly for hours. Yet he was ever eager to learn, listened to others deferentially, and spoke, even when most excited, with extreme modesty.

Every mental nerve, so to speak, of his delicate nature quivered with pain at being made the common-talk and the wonder of a fashionable watering-place. If he hated one thing more than another, it was the reputation of being a popular preacher. He abhorred the very name, as something which brought with it contamination. A chivalrous gentleman, he shrank from the parade of show, the vulgarising of his name, the obtrusion of his merits upon the public. Moreover, he felt that he was more than a fine speaker; and yet, most unfortunately, he convinced himself that his hearers only saw in him a beautiful talker, and not a teacher. Much of the indignant scorn and pride which rushed out sometimes in his words, when he spoke of the common opinions and rules of the world, may have taken their keenness from this conviction.

Not very long after he came to Brighton, a subscription was opened to present him with a testimonial. A book, elaborately bound, was placed to receive names in the reading-room of the Library. Mr. Robertson was indignant. One day the book mysteriously disappeared. It was never known, but shrewdly suspected, that he had himself carried off the obnoxious volume, and committed it in triumph to the flames. There are praises which are insults, which cannot be received without the receiver feeling self-contempt. He could not understand what he had done to deserve this torture. Such applause galled him, and stung him into galling words. He spoke of being made a stump-orator, of the infinite degradation inflicted on him by

popular opinion, of the self-scorn which it engendered. He wrote of it, at the beginning of his ministry at Brighton, in words as strong as those which follow, which date from its close:—

> If you knew how sick at heart I am with the whole work of parlement, talkee, palaver, or whatever else it is called; how lightly I hold the 'gift of the gab;' how grand and divine the realm of silence appears to me in comparison; how humiliated and degraded to the dust I have felt, in perceiving myself quietly taken by gods and men, for the popular preacher of a fashionable watering-place; how slight the power seems to me to be given by it of winning souls; and how sternly I have kept my tongue from saying a syllable or a sentence, in pulpit or on platform, *because* it would be popular! . . . .

There was something morbid in this. He was so wrung by the false admiration which was given him, that he could not feel the true reverence of those who formed the body of his congregation. Indeed, there was an element of morbidness in all the developments of his sensitiveness. But it was a morbidness which had not grown upon him from without like a fungus on a tree, but which was the natural outcome of his constitution and temperament. It was born with him. He never could have been entirely free from it, unless he had been a soldier in constant warfare. It was increased by physical disease, till it threatened to become a tyrannous power. But here, where his greatest weakness lay, appeared his greatest strength. If he could not exactly say, 'Most gladly, therefore, will I glory in mine infirmity, that the power of Christ may

rest upon me,' yet those who have closely known his character can say for him that he turned his necessity to glorious gain. He transmuted the dross of his nature into gold by the alchemy of Christian effort. 'He was the most inflexible person,' says an intimate friend, 'with all his almost morbid delicacy of feeling—an iron will, impossible to move when it was fixed by principle.' Another writes—

> His sharpest griefs never got the better of his power of concentrating himself in thought or in action. He could put them aside, as if they did not exist. Some of his finest sermons were thought out when distress of mind, it might be supposed, only gave him leave to *feel*. Some of his hardest work in the world was done when his spirit was most keenly wounded.

He possessed a clear view of the dangers to which he was exposed by his sensitiveness and impressibility. He might have been wrecked on the same rock as Coleridge. But his resolution was early taken: he would be, by God's help, a man after the pattern of Christ Jesus. He laboured from his earliest years to conquer the perilous tendencies of his nature. They arose sometimes from the excessive nervous irritation which the fierce excitement of mental exertion produced. He met them then by severe physical exercise. Into this, when it was possible for him—and that was but seldom—he entered with the eagerness with which he did everything. He had a lithe form; his step was quick, his carriage soldier-like, and it was refreshing to meet him as he walked, his motion breathed so of activity. It was almost amusing to go with him

when he went out shooting over a moor. He was entirely absorbed in his work. He would walk for hours after a single bird, and reluctantly leave off the pursuit of this coy grouse when night began to fall. He would sit for hours in a barrel sunk in the border of a marsh, waiting for wild-duck. His excitement kept him from feeling weariness, ennui, or discomfort. These hours of delight he obtained about once a year, and, in the earlier years of his ministry at Brighton, they refreshed him. But towards the end, when he had lost nervous force, the severity of the exercise which he sometimes took was a mistake. He reduced irritation by it, but he robbed himself of strength when he had none to spare.

But when the dangers to which his character was liable arose from mental or spiritual causes, he met them differently. When he was tortured by the noise of slander which surrounded him, and by the petty party opposition to which he was subjected, he had recourse to the healing influence of poetry, or took refuge in the study of chemistry, and in the dignity and calmness of the laws of that science forgot for a time the pain he suffered. He did not fall into the common mistake of endeavouring to eradicate his natural qualities because they seemed to tend to evil: he rather tried to restrain, balance, and exalt them by a higher motive. He fought with evil, he said, as Perseus fought with the sea-monster—from above. His rule of life was not 'Crush what is natural,' but 'Walk in the spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of

the flesh.' Far above all other motives was his love to Christ. That was the root of his life, and the life of all his effort. It was a conscious, personal, realised devotion. It was too hallowed a feeling for him to speak much of. It coloured and pervaded every thought; was an unceasing presence with him; lay at the foundation of every endeavour, and was brought to bear on every action in life, on every book he read, and almost on every word he spoke.

Temptations and doubts he strove to solve by working among the poor. The indulging in mere aspirations he would not permit himself: he freed his ideal world from its atmosphere of sloth and vague cloud-land, by putting, as far as he could, his aspirations into action. No work was too small for him. He did not despise the dullest intellect; and was fair, patient, and gentle in argument, even with the intolerant. He listened to a child with interest and consideration. Somehow, he reached the most dense in a Sunday-school class. He led the children to elaborate for themselves the thought he wished to give them, and to make it their own. No pains or patience were spared in doing this. It was strange to see so fiery a nature drudging on so meekly, and gently, and perseveringly, content to toil at striking sparks out of apparently hopeless clay. But untiring earnestness and unflinching resolution in duty made him do all things as in God's sight.

The pleasure of using fine words about religious feelings, and loud-sounding phrases about social wrongs, he despised with a true man's scorn. He spoke much

of Courtesy; and a friend has said of him, 'that his bearing towards inferiors was marked by the most polished delicacy; that his consideration for the comfort of servants was so great, that they adored him.' He spoke much of Truth, and he was crowned with its crown—the crown of thorns. He spoke much about Self-sacrifice, and he gave up his own pleasures and pursuits to almost anyone. He grudged a sixpence spent on personal gratification, and retrenched in what was even needful, that he might give to the necessities of others, and—he died at his post with his armour on to the last. He spoke much about the wrongs of woman; and it is very touching to know that during the last year of his life he frequently went forth at night, and endeavoured to redeem the fallen women of Brighton. This was the way in which he waged the battle against himself. It was a stern and a concealed contest. His suffering was great; but he kept it to himself. Only to one friend he compares himself to the Spartan boy who held his cloak around him while the fox was gnawing at his entrails. The physical pain he endured during the last six months of his life was excruciating. And yet, through all this, nothing is finer than his quiet devotion to all small duties, his steadfast mastery over himself, his unwavering adherence to a course of teaching which brought upon him the censure and slander which, however his reason might despise them, stung his heart to the last.

But he could not always restrain himself. Some-

times, when he was sure of sympathy, his passion broke forth in a redundance of sorrowful words; or his views of life, when physical exhaustion had made him less master over dark thoughts, were poured out in the relief of almost wild expression. It is these passages in his letters which his friends have hesitated to give to the public. But without them, I repeat, any view of his character would be incomplete. Its strength could not be understood unless through what men may call its weakness. Moreover, in these states of excitement—which were partly natural and partly unnatural, partly true and partly untrue—some of his finest thoughts and most delicate analyses of feeling, and some of his most startling eloquence, were produced. Pain made him creative: it was when his heart's blood was being drawn that the heart of his genius was revealed.

The letters which are inserted after this and the following chapter were written in 1849 and 1850. It must be distinctly kept in mind by the reader who wishes to distinguish between the work of Mr. Robertson and his feelings, who wishes to separate the apparent unmanliness of some of his expressions from the manliness of his life—first, that in these years ill health of a serious character began to throw its sombre shade over life, and extreme nervous irritability and pain to follow every intellectual exertion; secondly, that in these years, also, he recognised clearly, with a sorrow proportioned to his passionate desire for sympathy, the loneliness to which his teaching doomed him, and the systematic

opposition which he prophesied, only too truly, would increase year by year in virulence. One other cause there is for the gloomy hue of some of his letters: it is, that few men have ever felt more deeply than he with the sorrow of the world. Brought much into contact with grief, and pain, and guilt—realising by the force of his imagination the sufferings of the battle-field, and the cry of thousands, homeless, miserable, and done to death by the selfishness of men—appalled by the sin and crime which he saw everywhere and in their true light,—he was often crushed to the earth by the thought of the guilt and suffering of Humanity. He felt them personally, acutely, as if they were his own. It was no fictitious pain, no ideal grief; he could not put it aside. And, in connection with this, the terrible contradiction which all this sorrow, pain, and sin seemed to give to the truth that the Ruler of this world is Love, pressed upon him with a force which fiercely demanded a solution. Abraham's awful question, 'Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?' rang in his ears, and again and again was the expression of his inmost thought. He felt that life was not worth living, unless he could find the answer to that question. In proportion to the strange depth of his power of suffering with men, and to the almost preternatural keenness with which he felt the mystery of the great problem of the universe, was the slowness with which he found the answer. But he did find it, as the reader of his letters will see—and in the Cross of Christ. Once found, he acquiesced in its teaching, quietly and faith-

fully. All questioning, all doubt left him as he drew near to the close of his career. He could look beyond the scene in which Humanity suffers, to the larger stage where Suffering has its result in Perfection, and bow humbly before the wisdom of the infinite Charity. But, in the meantime, the inward pain he suffered, both from the doubt and that which suggested it, continually emerges in his writings, and colours his views of life.

Letters and Extracts.

XXIX.

August 1849.

My dear ——, The translation I sent you of Fichte is not the best. It was reckoned a failure: so, if you like to wait till the new one comes, which will be to-morrow, you can; or, if you prefer that, and then compare it with the other, perhaps that may be better, as it is only by degrees, and with some toil, that anyone gets at Fichte's meaning. I have begun to-day a work of his, which I had never read before, with wonder and delight—partly because it must perforce elevate, and partly because it is but the scientific exposition of views to which gradually and unscientifically I have worked my own way; in which I may henceforth progress, but go back never. The first chapter singularly resembles, even in expression, the views of last Sunday's sermon,—God being apprehended by thought, and in no other way approachable by us. Yet it is scarcely singular; for Plato, or the little I read of Plato, gave me an impulse which can never end through eternity, and Fichte's view is scientific Platonism.

My whole being, love and thought, must form themselves round this, and after the spirit of the supersensuous, or else never exist at all. Oh! that I could grasp the sublime truths which have floated before my soul as the solution of life's mystery for years, and which to the mass of minds are but the world of shadows—to me the only realities! . . . . I am compelled to penetrate into a region that is invisible, and there, somehow, in the eternal and the unalterable, which is not subject to the vicissitudes of that which is perishable—transient emotions, vexatious circumstances—I seem to find a home. . . . But this is an unsatisfactory, and, what is worse, an unproductive state. It may be grand to expatiate in a world of feeling and loneliness into which human voices do not penetrate. But we have a work to do on this earth: and I am almost sure that that work is done best by those minds which are definite, deal in formulas, and are not haunted by the sick dream of the unfound beauty, and pervaded by a conviction of the unreality of everything except thought and the invisible.

From within we must fetch our strength; for dependence upon aught external to our own souls leaves us strengthless, when its presence is removed or delayed. . . . . Our best blessedness can only be shaken to the centre by ourselves. Life is what we make it. And there are delicately-organised minds in which a mental error—a fault in the tone of thinking—can produce more misery than crime can in coarser minds. . . . . .

XXX.

My dear Friend,—I do most earnestly rejoice that people have felt an improvement and a softened purified tone in my ministry.

I will endeavour to develope the Catechism into the sense in which I am at present content to accept its very words. 'He bore my sins,' for instance, I am willing to say, and in

deep humiliation, in a deeper sense than many mean; though I doubt not, because deep and because connected with the great principle which awfully pervades the universe, therefore, for that very reason, counted a heterodox sense.

It is often said, '*My sins nailed Him to the Tree.*' There is a sense in which this contains a deep and extensive truth—another in which it is merely the statement of an absurdity.

The crisis of the conflict between the kingdoms of Good and Evil took place in the death of Christ: the highest manifestation of Good in Him—the highest manifestation of Evil in the persons of those who saw the Divinest Excellence, and called it Satanic Evil. To call evil good, and good evil—to call Divine Good Satanic Wickedness,—there is no state lower than this. It is the rottenness of the core of the heart: it is the unpardonable because irrecoverable sin.

With this evil, in its highest development, the Son of Man came into collision. He died unto sin. The Prince of this World came and found nothing congenial in Him. He was his victim, not his subject.

So far as I belong to that kingdom or fight in that warfare, it may be truly said, the Saviour died by my sin. Every time I hate a good man for his meekness or his goodness—find bad motives to account for the excellence of those who differ from me—judge sins of weakness more severely than sins of wickedness—shut God out of my soul to substitute some lie of my own or of society,—I am a sharer in the spirit to which He fell a victim. He bare my sins in His body on the Tree.

Similarly, He Himself says of the prophets—'The blood of all the prophets, which was shed from the foundation of the world, shall be required of this generation.' Why? 'Because they bare witness that they allowed the deeds of their fathers.' In their day they did the same thing in spirit which their fathers did in theirs. So in the Sanhedrim Stephen saw the same brood of vipers which had stung Moses and the Prophets.

So, too, the indulger of hatred is guilty of murder, and takes his place with murderers.

But to say that He bore my sins in this sense—that He was haunted by an evil conscience and its horrors for this lie of mine, and that cruel word, &c., is to make a statement of which it is not enough to say that it is false: it is absolutely unmeaning, as well as destructive of all *real* conception of the enormity of sin. No effort can get any conception of what is meant by conscience of another's sin. It represents Him as suffering under a delusion, and makes the whole agony base itself upon a figment, as unreal as a recovery at law under the *noms de guerre* of 'Doe and Roe,' invented by those who had to defend themselves against the monkish chicanery of the Middle Ages by subtleties as ingenious as their own. Quite rightly do the advocates of this 'Redemption by a figment of Law' call this system *of justification* a 'forensic proceeding.'

XXXI.

Enclosed you will find one of those letters which provoke me, though meant in kindness. Is it pride which makes such things offensive, since annoyance implies conscious superiority to the praiser, and seems inconsistent with the apparent humility which disclaims power? I think not. Two gentlemen come into my chapel—one uncertain of my orthodoxy, the other strongly prejudiced against the belief of it: both go away satisfied that all is right, and magnanimously condescend to intimate approval, which, being interpreted, means all is harmless, old, regular, dull. Whereat I have no right to take offence; but the assumption of a right to approve is a little galling, because it implies the idea of being in possession of a measure by which the approver is entitled to try, and, if necessary, blame. To award approbation, is to retain the power and right of awarding rebuke. From an indisputable superior that can be borne, from a friend it is delightful,

for then it is only the answer of a second and a purified conscience. No one is insulted by what his own conscience, the most sacred part of himself, affirms. But when it comes from a stranger who has no claim to friendship, and has no right at least to *assume* superiority, it seems to me very like the comments of a master on a schoolboy's exercise, which he certainly would have scored if it had had faults, and perhaps even given him an imposition. I disclaim the power of ninety-nine out of every hundred who hear me to even judge of what I say; and that, not because I think myself superior to them, and am therefore proud, but because I live in a realm of thought which is not theirs, and they do not know the existence of the problems which I cannot solve, nor can they guess the difficulties. In entering the narrow channel of the Bermudas, the pilot stands not at the helm, but at the bows, looking down into the deep water, clear as crystal, to see the coral reef above which, or rather through which, he is threading his dangerous way. Sometimes there is scarcely twice the ship's own breadth between point and point; yet between those he must go, cannot pause, and ten feet divergence on either side would be shipwreck. He may do his work very awkwardly, and even be conscious of great mistakes; but with the most perfect humility he may utterly disclaim the power of anyone standing on the shore to judge his seamanship, who is looking along a smooth, level surface, instead of looking down upon a bed of rocks that lie beneath the surface. No wonder that his tacks, and turns, and zigzag eccentricities of course are perfectly unintelligible. 'I would have steered direct to that point.' 'Yes, my good friend, but did you see the rock? and if not, what can you know about the matter? Come up here, and then give me an opinion if you can.' Now, the pilot who is up there, is not a wiser man than the other, but he has got a different point of view, and from that point he defies all human judgment, *until you go and sit beside him.*

XXXII.

You ask for an explanation of Tennyson's expression—

When I felt the days before me.

I think it is one of those of which you cannot distil the quintessence without crushing the flower. The work of analysis in the laboratory is always a coarse one. Earthen crucibles and hammers, and cold furnaces and blowpipes, no doubt, scientifically resolve all things into their elements, but the graceful forms of things disappear in the midst of the rude apparatus. However, I will try.

Our connection with the future may be a dead or a living one. Freshness of anticipation and hope make it living. Repeated disappointment or satiety dull that feeling, and, as it were, benumb the sense by which we vividly felt the connection thrill our being. A wire of metal connects you with the electrical machine, and every spark travels to your frame. A rod of glass connects you, too, but not electrically, being a non-conductor. You do not feel the innate real force, the spiritual life which is in the machinery before you. It is only machinery. Or, again, did you never in fishing *feel* the life that is throbbing at the other end of the line when a fresh untired fish is running out all the tackle? Did you never observe how all this changes into a dull, dead drag when either the animal is worn out, or a piece of lifeless sea-weed has got entangled on your hook, and draws it perpendicularly, heavily downwards? Magnify that—fancy the vigorous pull of a whale drawing a thousand fathoms of rope after him, and the boat joyously plunging after at an appalling rate through an ocean which has no bounds visible on either side, the gunwale brought level with the waves, and the breakers dancing in their spray, with just sufficient risk to make the excitement wilder; and then, I suppose, you have a kind of illustration of a poet's young heart when 'he feels the days before him, the wild pulsation of the strife.' When the life of the future

slackens, the mighty mass slowly gravitates, and the pull is a dead one, down rather than up; or else it rises to take breath, and lies flat—to plunge no more into the unfathomable.

XXXIII.

September 1849.

My dear ———,—What do I think of *souvenirs*? I like them *much*, provided they are not costly. Yet I know not whether I do not like even more to dispense with symbols altogether. For they gather round them, by constant use, new associations, by which the old are obliterated, the precious and hallowed first ones. All things worn or often seen are liable to this. The old habit of erecting an altar of stones to commemorate any signal event was different. It was revisited only at the interval of years, and infallibly brought back the old feeling with which it had stood in connection once. But ornaments, and such things, collect *accretions* of daily incidents which they suggest, and the symbol does not naturally, but only arbitrarily, recall the person or idea intended to be consecrated by it. I have an insuperable objection to presents—almost a monomania; I am happier without receiving.

There is a pretension in what is costly, too, that is provoking. It seems to affect to interpret in one kind of value that which is precious in another order altogether—feeling by gold—and feeling is simply incommensurable except by feeling. Gold no more interprets it or symbolises it than things seen can resemble things heard. Whereas trifles—humble and unpretending—do not challenge an indignant comparison between the preciousness of the material and the preciousness of the feeling, and simply standing as memorials may become valuable.

I do not think I have rightly made clear, even yet, why purchased presents dissatisfy me. The reason is, perhaps,

dimly felt, rather than definitely made plain, even to myself. It has been an instinct which I have not thought it necessary to analyse. Let me try. I think I am pained rather than pleased by such souvenirs, because they are arbitrary symbols of regard. They are like the symbols used in algebra to represent any number, say, 745. You take a letter, x or y. You say that y equals and represents 745—a connection purely arbitrary. To-morrow y may represent 20, if you say that it is to do so. It is only by an act of the will that the letter represents a number. Take it out of that connection—let the arbitrary meaning pass—and the *natural* idea suggested is a sound.

Similarly with purchased presents. I get a piece of metal or stone, and say, 'let it represent my regard.' This is arbitrary; for the only connection which subsists between it and me, really, is that I paid for it a certain number of pounds or shillings. It is not my idea or device executed in metal (for then, indeed, the metal does become a secondary, and the device a primary thought—provided the material be not so costly as to overwhelm and annihilate the idea of design and designer); nor is it my work, nor anything which is peculiarly associated with my history, for the laws of such tokens absurdly lay a stress upon the gift being *new*. So that in fact I have merely given my friend an algebraic symbol, which might have represented another as well as myself, and will in truth some day represent *him*, if he die, and it become the property of a relation. Now it may even happen, and I think generally does, that this arbitrary meaning is not the one naturally suggested by the symbol, but is rather one which it requires a distinct effort of the will to call up and recreate. I use the pencil-case which my friend has given me, daily; but that daily use surrounds it with manifold associations. I used it perhaps, for instance, to write a letter in some desolate place in the Alps, where I could get no ink: well, that association, in spite of myself, rivets itself to the token of my

friend's affection. It lies before me ever after, suggesting that sublime scenery, and calling up the forms and features of the friends or strangers who were with me then, rather than those of the donor. Or, perhaps, instead of one vivid association, it may connect itself with innumerable weaknesses which it suggests when I look at it,—sometimes one, sometimes another. It is very plain that its representation of my friend is now no longer the natural, but only an arbitrary one. I can by an act of will recall the algebraic meaning, and recollect that it was said, Let case = A B C's regard. But by an act of will I can also recall that regard itself without the presence of the pencil-case; so that the symbol is no real assistance to keeping him in mind, because it requires exactly the same effort which would have succeeded without its intervention.

I have no objection to receive costly presents from persons I do not value (except so far as a feeling of independence revolts against accepting them), because I possess a thing which is in itself worth having, and I do not feel anything inadequate in the representation, for they represent themselves these valuable gifts, which is all I want. But with anyone for whom I feel regard, a souvenir provokes me to look at it, just as an illuminated cloud does at sunset, because I know the glory will soon pass and leave the dull cloud behind alone. The gold will be there on the finger or on the table as usual; but the beauty of its significance will be gone or dimmed.

There are, of course, some gifts which are not arbitrary, but natural symbols, and suggest all that is desired without efforts. If Sir Charles Napier would give me the horse he rode at Meeanee with the great scar still remaining, no subsequent association could supersede that. The shot he gave my father which grazed him in the action, a letter, something that has been used or worn,—these are natural memorials significant for ever of one thing, and never by any possibility of a second in the same degree.

So much for receiving. I do not mind *giving*; for though I

cannot bear to profane, by meaner associations, anything which has once reminded me of a friend, I feel no pain at the idea of that which has belonged to me being profaned. Indeed, I should not apply such a word to it. I give for the pleasure of giving, and also for present use or present pleasure. When those are passed, I like to give again, something which may be of new use and new pleasure. Some years ago, when I could ill afford it, I gave a man a gold snuff-box like a boy: I was not a bit hurt by seeing that same box last year, dull, in evident disuse, lying among a number of gimcracks on a side-table. I know he values me as much as he did when I was a boy. But in receiving it is quite different.

> As in this bad world below,
> Noblest things find vilest using.

I cannot bear to profane, by common use, even the writing of one I care for. A direction on a parcel or an envelope I carefully tear off and put in the fire, before I could convert the paper even into the cover of a book or another parcel. So much of superstition—is it such?—clings to minds which fancy themselves entirely emancipated from all the delusions of materialism.

For these reasons I am painfully fastidious about receiving. I had rather have nothing, far rather, when I must. I dislike everything except it be of a character such as I have indicated in the class of things enumerated above. Not arbitrary, but natural. . . . .

I say a flower is more precious than gold or jewels,—not simply *as* precious, but *more* precious, just because it has no intrinsic value, and because it will so soon wither. Its withered leaves are more treasured than a costly gem, and more sacred because they have not two kinds of value, but only one. Such gifts are as disembodied spirits—*all* spirit, and pure.

All sombre thoughts pass away beneath the genial influence of this serene, cloudless sky. What a soft, pure, pearly blue!

and the white smoke rises up into it in slow and most indolent wreaths, as if it were resolved to enjoy itself and *recline* upon cushions of summer air, robed in loosest, thinnest morning drapery of gauze.

Does not every *fresh* morning that succeeds a day of gloom and east wind, seem to remind us that for a living spirit, capable, because living, of renovation, there can be no such thing as 'failure,' whatever a few past years may seem to say?

XXXIV.

My dear ——,—It is very surprising to find how little we retain of a book, how little we have really made our own when we come to interrogate ourselves as to what account we can give of it, however we may seem to have mastered by understanding it. Hundreds of books read once have passed as completely from us as if we had never read them; whereas the discipline of mind got by writing down, not copying, an abstract of a book which is worth the trouble, fixes it on the mind for years, and, besides, enables one to read other books with more attention and more profit. I am very anxious to do what good I can while it is allowed me. To this, as to every other thing which has light and life, perhaps the night cometh. Then feelings pass, hopes perish: that which was becomes more faint and dreamlike every day—that which is *done* alone remains with permanency. But a man must prepare *alone*; for, as Goethe says, 'mental power elaborates itself in solitude.' All else is only valuable as an impulse and an excitement to this. Much of our time is necessarily taken up, but we should force ourselves resolutely sometimes to be alone. . . . Broken and interrupted as life is, it demands all the more earnest effort to prevent it *all* falling into fragments. I knew the restlessness and misery of time occupied in a desultory way—the hurried scramble into which it converts existence, and the loneliness

and aimlessness which it leaves behind, and which tempt one to get rid of them by the same unprofitable seeking of distractions again.

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All devotional feeling requires sacrificial expression. There is a 'sacrifice of the lips,' and there is also the sacrifice of an offering which involves expense and suffering. The first, being the readiest at command, is the most usually given; but, being given, it unfortunately prevents the other, because, first of all, costing little, words are given prodigally, and sacrificial acts must toil for years to cover the space which a single fervid promise has stretched itself over. No wonder that the slow acts are superseded by the available words, the weighty bullion by the current paper-money. If I have conveyed all I feel by language, I am tempted to fancy, by the relief experienced, that feeling has attained its end and realised itself. Farewell, then, to the toil of the 'daily sacrifice!' Devotion has found for itself a vent in words.

Now there seems to me to be a great difference in the effects produced by these two kinds of sacrificial expression. That by words is simply relief—necessary, blessed—without which smothered feeling would be torture—sometimes, in some minds, madness. But, being only relief, it does not strengthen the feeling, except so far as it prevents morbidness. It rather weakens it by getting rid of the painfulness. It is a safety-valve; but the danger is that so much force should escape by an impetuous rush through this—that there should be little left to bring higher energies into action. For this reason I rejoice, even though made restless, when my words cannot be commensurate with emotions. The other kind of expression, on the contrary—the sacrifice of acts—is not only a relief, but a strength to feeling. You condense your floating vague desires in something that does not disperse into thin air. There it is, visible—done; one of the facts of life; part of your history, credit realised in gold; a pledge for the

future, for this reason, that if your feelings should alter afterwards, all those acts which have cost so much are thrown away, and become so much time, suffering, expense, lost for ever. You guard the feeling for the sake of not losing all this. Thus deeds become a home which arrest and bind to themselves the feeling and the love which built them up. Your heart becomes the inmate of its own acts, and dwells in the midst of its expenditure. It has given away its home, and it has no other home except in remaining near the one to whom all this has been given. Thenceforth two spirits dwell together. I think the *heavenly* philosophy of this is contained in those words, 'Sell that ye have, and give alms . . . . . for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.' We cannot afford to lightly throw away that person or that cause on which we have ventured so much.

No friendship is worth the name, unless it does the highest good, assisting to escape from the manifest forms of selfishness, and to look at duty with fresh impulse.

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XXXV.

It is impossible to calculate the effects which may be produced by distrust and suspicion. They make the heart collapse, and wither the character. I believe that universal distrust would ruin any character.

If anything like insincerity or aiming at effect be hinted, it is but natural to endeavour to remove such impressions; but this can be only done by making every word and act look as probable and as natural as is possible. True feelings and true words are suppressed, if they do not seem likely, even supposing that untrue ones are not simulated instead, because they seem likely. All this produces a secret sense of acting a part: true it is that the part is only this, to seem what we are; but that itself is acting, and it is the com-

mencement of a habit of insincerity. Not really insincerity in itself, it is yet in feeling so like to the feeling of insincerity that the transition from one to the other is fearfully facilitated. When the feeling of real duplicity or insincerity actually presents itself, the mind is already half familiar with it, having been familiar with the semblance, and does not recoil with that vehemence which marks a heart that has never suspected itself, nor been suspected. I would engage, if it were not a Satanic task, to make any child a liar by cross-questioning every assertion, and showing him that I suspected every thought and feeling. He would soon learn to dwell in the region of plausibilities, and cease to breathe the fresh, free air of unconscious truth.

I must have expressed myself very ill for you to have mistaken what I said respecting prayer. I did not mean that the change of heart cannot be obtained by prayer. I only said, though evidently not with sufficient distinctness, that Simon Magus leaning upon Peter's prayer, was of a piece with the rest of his conduct, and belonged to a mind which looked for marvellous effects from external agency. Money, imposition of hands, prayer,—it was all the same—something that could be performed independently of character, anything but inward moral effort. Prayer was to Simon of the nature of a charm; certain cabalistic words, of the secret of making which efficacious Peter was in possession. I think there is a great difference between Simon's praying himself, and asking another to pray for him. Of course, the latter is also done by Christians, rightly; but in the mouth of a man like Simon, such a request is only superstition, if you compare it with the rest of his character. Indeed, I believe that the reliance which many people now place on the intercession of others for them, leading, as I have seen it lead, to an indolent feeling of some mysterious transaction going on without the sphere of their cognisance, in which they are interested, and the results of which will some day be comfortably their

own, is very much of the same nature—a mere belief in magic.

It is also possible that even a man's own prayer may assume this character, and be little more of a spiritual act than the Calmuck's rotation of a metal plate, on which the prayer is inscribed: such, unquestionably, was the prayer of the Pharisees, who expected that 'they should be heard for their much speaking.' Whenever praying degenerates into saying prayers, or when prayer becomes *prayers*, measured and counted, acts instead of utterances, I think this has taken place. Only in this sense could I say that the soul cannot invest itself with the Spirit through prayer.

As to the remainder of your question—where the inward change begins?—there you touch a point on which I hold it impossible to give theoretical satisfaction, though it does not seem to be difficult to answer it to our own selves practically. The question, in fact, touches the great difficulty of the union of the Spontaneous with the Necessary. A reply, one of the best I know, is given in a book I am reading; whether it will satisfy you I cannot yet say:—

'What makes a man turn to God in the first instance?' Unquestionably, the Spirit that is seeking him; but which is also seeking us, which requires a reciprocal effort on our part. I firmly believe that the Universal Spirit, 'not far from any one of us,' is seeking all; and, in the union-point, where the will of the Finite is changed by, and voluntarily adopts as its own, the will of the Infinite, lies the answer to the deep question you have put—'What makes a man turn to God in the first instance?' I despair of ever giving, or ever seeing given, a clearer reply than this, which leaves the matter still unfathomable; for plainly there is something in it deeper than the farthest-reaching minds have yet penetrated. Once it was a question of torture to me, interfering with energy, and paralysing me with the feeling of being a mere machine, acting under the delusion of spontaneousness. Now I am

pretty well satisfied with the practical solution of the question, except in moments, when thought works darkly, apart from action,—God's own appointed eye-salve for the blinding disease of speculative tendencies. My reply (for myself sufficient) is this;—Reasoning tells me I am a leaf, blown about by the breath of the Spirit-wind as it listeth. I review the reasoning step by step, find no flaw in it. Nothing but a horrible predestination environs me. Every act of my past and future life, external and internal, was necessitated. The conclusion is irrefutable. I act upon this. Immediately I find that, practically, I have got wrong. I cannot act upon the idea of being fated, reft of will, without injuring my whole being. My affections are paralysed, my actions disordered. I find, therefore, that the view which is theoretically truth, translated into conduct becomes practically a lie. Now, on the other hand, conscience tells me I am free. I am to seek God. I am not to lie passive, waiting for the moving of the waters, but to obey a voice within me which I recognise as divine, and which says, 'Arise, take up thy bed and walk.' My intellect stands in contradiction to my conscience; but conscience is given me to act by. In matters of duty, therefore, I am bound to obey my conscience rather than my intellect. I believe the voice which says, 'You can seek God and find him,' rather than the one which says, 'Poor victim of fantasy, you cannot stir, you can only wait!' There is the best *concise* reply I can give you to your question.

XXXVI.

A Character.

I thought I saw that sympathy and questionings had roused her, and anything is better for her than a dead calm, when the sails hang flaccid by the masts. I build the hope of usefulness upon this kind of influence with more certainty than upon any

other, and it is a great delight to me to find that it is not yet exhausted, but still tells; just the same kind of delight which a pilot, I suppose, feels when, in the midst of a long tropical lull, the ship once more acknowledges the helm in his hand. And this is only one of the many indications which make the wants and needs of her character intelligible to me. Excitement. The word, unfortunately, only has a bad sense, and we have not another for the corresponding good one; as our phlegmatic national character cannot acknowledge any excitement to be good or natural, and therefore provides no name for such an idea. Excitement—by which I mean that which *stirs*, and gives us a vivid consciousness of actually being—is at once the health and disease, the food and poison, the need and the bane, of her existence.

Some people can be wound up, and go for years without winding up again; but you cannot wind up a Geneva watch in that way. The longer a habit is persevered in, the easier it becomes to them. It is not so with her: she neeeds perpetually the construction of a set of habits, in order to save her from the weariness of 'unchartered freedom;' but no sooner has habit threatened to become inveterate than it passes into monotony, and she pants for freedom—she wants then again to feel

> —— The wild pulsation that she felt before the strife,
> When she heard the days before her, and the tumult of her life.

The truth is, that it is a living life that she needs—successions of the habitual and the impulsive: the habitual, to give her rest; the impulsive, to make her feel voluntariness—the life of feeling instead of the horrid deadness of machinery. But every time she passes from one of these states into the other, will be a state of trial — settling down from excitement, rousing up from monotony. Both will cause her suffering, just as drowning and resuscitation are both miserable sensations. The only remedy against this would be to discover,

if possible, a new invigorating excitement before the old has worn out. She is happy, calm, bright, active, good, energetic, when she has been moved; for I perceive—and how well I understand it!—that her heart sets her intellect and other powers in motion, not her intellect her heart. I wish I knew how deep necessity for excitement could be harmonised with equally deep need of rest. No form of life will do that which does not healthily combine satisfactions for both these wants. I have not said all I want to say about excitement. It seems to me, as things are, to do her more harm than good; she takes it indiscriminately of all kinds. That astonishing description given by De Quincey of the experience of an opium-eater, passing from sublimities almost celestial into horrors quite infernal . . . or that strange state which I felt for twelve hours under the influence of chloroform, and vainly attempted to describe. If she would use the chloroform of life prudently, under control, to assuage pain, it might be well. Her exquisite susceptibility, managed with a philosophy which she is capable of, and which is but the application of and the only real use of self-anatomy, would fit her to be one of the noblest beings I ever conceived. I speak thus out of painful experience. My nature resembles hers in many things—impulsive, sustained in good by stimulus, flagging without it; and yet exhausted sometimes to a state in which I could call Dante's conceptions of the *Inferno* dull. For example, the thought of drudging on here at the same work, unvaried; two sermons a Sunday, inspiration by clockwork for several years, is simply the conception of an impossibility. I want perpetually the enthusiasm which comes from fresh views of duty and untrodden paths of usefulness—new impulse from the heart; yet that in itself, when it comes, leaves me worn to the extremity of endurance. Something of this I have observed in her, with keener susceptibilities and less of the necessity which, at the same time that it galls, forces me to work at a given time. Consequently, I make no doubt, she suffers more

and has fewer remedies. My safety lies, or rather lay, in the resolve to work up to the collar, hot and hard, without intermission to the last, not leaving time or coolness to feel the parts that were galled, and raw, and wrung. It would, I suppose, have ended soon, only in doing all this I stirred the human feelings of others for good. . . . However, I have that which she has not—a routine. . . . It is from this similarity that, knowing myself, I think I partly know her and her needs. The key to all her character is its impulsiveness, and the whole secret of her moral improvement and inward happiness lies, not in the blunting but in the right direction of it. . . . Strength is what we want in all trials, small or great. The cup did not pass, even at the entreaty with tears which came from Him, but there was seen an angel strengthening Him to bear, and to drink in gentleness, not to put aside.

XXXVII.

Another.

Often it is the safest way to shut the eyes and be half-blind to many things in a friend's character, which must be taken as it is, for better for worse; but in ——'s character I am grateful to find that his perfect transparency reveals only the more delicately the moss-fibres, which are not blemishes but beauties in the rock-crystal. I was prepared to discover many faults, but I was not prepared to find that the very faults and the things which disappoint will bear the magnifying-glass, and only give fresh insight into a character which perfectly astonishes me by its exquisite delicacy. I do verily believe that his imperfections are like pearls in the sea-shell—aberrations from healthful nature, if you will, but more tender and tinted with heavenlier iridescence than even the natural shell itself.

Some failings are so precious that they command reverence,

and touch deeply, like the fine blue mould which grows on sweetness, and which you gently brush aside until a closer scrutiny has shown you how curiously and finely beautiful it is. I can trust that character.

Altogether, my conviction receives fresh accessions of strength that in all that belongs to the finest, as well as the loftiest of character, I have never met anything that came near what I dreamed—a being not conventionally right, not correct by rule, not stiffened into propriety by a little horde of maxims, but moving often in new worlds amidst relationships and spheres of feeling where others would be bewildered, and left without chart or compass, and yet guided unerringly by a kind of sublime instinct, as the bird of passage is, in its high flight for the first time through fields of air, where the sound of wings was never heard before. The more I see, the more I honour that marvellous heart, the more I feel it is unlimited and incalculable; in this way possessing that of the infinite, without which I suppose it would be impossible to feel towards anything with perfect security of permanence. ——'s character is a living one, inexhaustible. None can prophesy what he will say or do under given circumstances; but when the event has shown, then all is found in harmony with the rest, and beautiful; and the discovery of these new traits is a source of perpetual surprise and ever-fresh pleasure. From the first, I perceived that —— was not to be tried by the laws by which others are fairly tested, just because their life is guided by them. I should as little think of referring ——'s life to the ordinary maxims of convention, as I should of applying the simple ellipse of the common planet's revolution to determine the course and aberrations of the comet; yet the comet is vague and eccentric only to an astronomy which is not advanced enough to estimate the larger number and the complication of the forces which are at work within it and without it. Its wild and wondrous flight is just as really in obedience to a law within itself, as the career of a common

star—only a higher and more comprehensive law—and its apparently capricious movements might be calculated with as much certainty, if only the mathematics large enough were found. I like a mind and heart which I cannot calculate, and yet in which I have the firmest trust that there is in them no caprice, and which are for ever ruled by law. I can repose on such an one in faith, even when I cannot understand. Only by faith can friendship with such an one subsist. Nothing has struck me more than the refined perceptions in reference to a friendship that is passed. It is very rare and very beautiful to see feelings which once were true, respected after their truthfulness has passed away. . . . There is strength as well as delicacy in one who can still respect, and be just to the memory of obliterated friendship.

XXXVIII.

A Stray Thought.

Perhaps no man can attain the highest excellence who is insensible to sensuous beauty. A sense of earthly beauty may, and often does, lead to softness, voluptuousness, and defilement of heart; but its right result is to lead on as a stepping-stone to the sense of a higher beauty. Sensuous beauty leaves the heart unsatisfied; it gives conceptions which are infinite, but it never gives or realises the infinite.

> For human beauty is a sight
> To sadden rather than delight,
> Being the prelude of a lay
> Whose burden is decay.

Still it *leads* on to the infinite. It answers partly to a sense which it does not satisfy, but leaves you craving still, and, because craving, therefore seeking. The true objective of that sense is moral beauty; and by degrees we find and feel, as the outward fades and crumbles away, that it is a type of real

beauty hidden under its seeming. Through the sensuous we perceive the supersensuous; through the visible the invisible loveliness. Through disappointment at the unreal phantom, we learn to believe in and live for the unchangeable. No man knows the highest goodness who does not feel beauty. The beauty of holiness is its highest aspect. To act right because it is beautiful, and because noble, true, self-denying, pure acts commend themselves to a soul attuned to harmony, is the highest kind of goodness. 'To see the King in his beauty' is the loftiest and most unearthly attainment. Can anyone be keenly alive to this who has no heart for external beauty? Surely he who is callous to form and colour, and unmoved by visible beauty, is not above, but below our nature; he may be good, but not in the highest order of goodness. Goethe says that the Beautiful is above the Good: probably meaning that the beauty of an action is a more spiritual and elevated notion than its obligation or its usefulness.

CHAPTER VIII.

OCTOBER 1849—DECEMBER 1850.

Visit to Cheltenham—New Interest in the Lives of others and in Ministerial Work—Depression—Great Intellectual Activity—Afternoon Lectures on the Book of Genesis—Gorham Case—Sermons on Baptism, on the Sabbath, on the Atonement—Virulent Opposition—Solitary Position—Summing up of Life—Internal dissension in the Working-Man's Institute—Proposition to admit Infidel Publications into the Library—His Speech on the Occasion—Its Meaning—Its partial Success—Reconstruction of the Association—His Letters on the Subject—Speech at the Meeting against the Papal Division of England into Dioceses—Two Letters of Gratitude from Working Men.

Letters from October 1849, to December 31, 1850.

IN October 1849, Mr. Robertson paid a short visit to Cheltenham. He walked and rode over the haunts which had been endeared to his youth. He renewed some old acquaintances, and rekindled the embers of old associations. There were many happy and many exquisitely painful recollections awakened within him. 'These cases,' he says, speaking of some disappointments he had suffered, and some opportunities he had lost, 'have come like the odour of newly-turned earth upon my heart.' On the whole, the visit appears to have done him good. Perhaps the comparison which it forced him to institute between the past and the present made more plain than before his own advance in intellectual energy and spiritual knowledge. It is by comparing

periods, not days of life, that progress becomes manifest. He returned to Brighton convinced that he had gained clear views of truth. In the Tyrol, in 1847, he had despaired; now, though he was wearied of life, he could say, 'I know the right, and even in darkness will steer right on.'

There arose in him about this time, also, a greater interest in the lives of others. He had thought too much about his own trials and difficulties. He had been a 'self-torturing sophist.' Speaking of his past life, he says of himself, 'Formerly, my eyes but slept to look within: all my interest in the outward world faded in comparison with my intense interest in the inner world.' But now he had discovered new interests. He found among his congregation some whose mental and spiritual difficulties were similar to those which had been his own, and to whom he could give the sympathy and help which are born of a Suffering which has passed into Victory. All his powers were aroused. By entering fully into the lives of others he freed himself from much of that painful self-consciousness which is the curse of a sensitive character. In proportion as his friendship was deep was his imagination penetrative into the characters of his friends, and that to such a degree that he took their lives into his own. And for all in whom he became interested, he was untiring in effort. He invented new plans for their lives, new interests, new pursuits. He sought ceaselessly for remedies for their trials, and means of escape from their perplexities. There never lived a truer friend.

It was at this time also that his interest in his ministerial work became greater, though, from his letters, the contrary might be imagined. But the passages in which he describes his dislike of preaching and his own coldness of heart are, in reality, descriptions of the reaction of feeling after the intense excitement of preaching. Such passages are almost always to be found in letters written on Monday. They are in themselves proof of the almost awful intensity with which he laboured. He could not do his duty with the quiet monotonousness which neither wears out the mind nor exhausts the body. He did it with a repressed fierceness which, when the time of its expression —on Sunday—was over, left him a prey to thoughts which, in healthier moments, he denied to be his own. 'I am not fit,' he says, 'for ministerial work. I want years and years to calm me. My heart is too feverish, quivers and throbs too much as flesh recently cut by the surgeon's knife.' Thus the deeper his interest in his work, the greater was his excitement; and the greater the excitement, the more morbid was the reaction, the more gloomy the aspect in which he saw his labours, the darker his misgivings of their success.

And it is no wonder that he was at this time so exhausted and so painfully depressed, for his mental work was great. Never, during his whole life had his intellect been more productive. In October, he preached upon the question of the Sabbath, which was being then agitated in Brighton in connection

with some new post-office regulations. The sermon is published in the first volume, under the title of the 'Shadow and Substance of the Sabbath.' In November, he embodied in a sermon—'Caiaphas' View of Vicarious Sacrifice'—his partly original theory of the Atonement. In December alone he preached sixteen times—mostly on the advent of Christ. He delivered to crowded congregations on Friday mornings four Advent lectures on Christianity in contact with the Greek, the Roman, the Barbarian, and the Jew, which were in their way unique. He preached on Sunday mornings such sermons as 'The Means of realising the Second Advent,' vol. i. 152; 'The Principle of the Spiritual Harvest,' vol. i. 211; and the 'Loneliness of Christ,' vol. i. 227. In the afternoons, he finished his lectures on the Acts of the Apostles, with which he had begun the year. Towards the end of the month, he preached—on the day of public mourning for the Queen Dowager—the only sermon published during his lifetime—'The Israelite's Grave in a Foreign Land.' Most of these sermons have been preserved; and they are, even in a literary point of view, wonderful, considering the short time in which they were produced, for their sustained power of thought and of expression, for their research and originality. None of them are unworthy of the others; none of them betray carelessness of preparation, or dependence on mere fluency of diction. It is fortunate that they were preserved, though their preservation cost him more labour than their preparation. They were written out for a friend, from memory, the

evening of the day on which they were delivered. Everyone knows how irksome it is to recall, in cold blood, what has been said in excitement; to write out, in the study alone, what has been brought out by the presence of numbers. It was peculiarly irksome and irritating to him, but he did it freely and gladly, because impelled by friendship. He forgot the toil; but the toil did not forget to produce its fruit of exhaustion. If there be added, to complete this account of one month's intellectual work, that almost every day he was engaged in preparing the pupils of the Training School for examination, it is astonishing that he was not more morbid in feeling and outworn in body.

Early in January 1850, he went away to recruit his health and to visit some friends in Ireland; but the visit was not long enough to restore his strength. On his return, he commenced lecturing in the afternoons on the Book of Genesis. His letters prove how systematically and fully he prepared for this work. The lectures, when published, will show with what mingled wisdom and freedom he met the difficulties of the earlier chapters; how fairly he stated the claims of scientific and historical truth, even when they were in conflict with the narrative of the sacred text; and while declaring that the Mosaic cosmogony could not be reconciled with geological facts, still succeeded in showing its inner harmony, in principles, with the principles of scientific geology. Neither did he shrink from putting his congregation in possession of the results of German criticism upon Genesis. He made them acquainted with the discussion

on the Jehovah and Elohim documents, but he did not deny the Mosaic compilation of these documents. He discussed fully the question of the universality of the Flood. He spoke with a boldness, adorned with a rare reverence, upon the vexed and generally avoided subjects of the confusion of tongues, the destruction of the cities of the plain, the temptation of Abraham. In no case, however, was his preaching destructive, but constructive. Men went away from his chapel opposed, it is true, to the popular theory of inspiration, but deeply convinced of *an* inspiration. It was, indeed, impossible, in treating of these matters, to avoid the great question of Inspiration, and its limits; it was, therefore, introduced incidentally, from Sunday to Sunday. His mind became stirred on the subject. But the only result of this interest was his translation at this time of Lessing's small treatise on the 'Education of the Human Race.' * The following sentence occurs in one of his letters, written in March 1850:

I projected once a work on Inspiration, and had well-nigh resolved to do it—a year ago, when the impulse to do great things and to be a standard-bearer was renewed with mighty force. Had I kept to this resolve, Lessing's remarks, and some other fragments, should have been translated as pioneers; for the English mind is not prepared yet, and Lessing's advice (67, 68, 69,)† is worth attending to.

* Published in London. Smith, Elder & Co. 1858.

† 67. 'The youth must consider his Primer as the first of all books, that impatience at being only preparing may not hurry him on to things for which he has, as yet, laid no basis.

68. 'And that is also of the greatest importance now. Thou abler spirit, who art fretting and restless over the last page of the Primer—

In March, while these lectures on Genesis were still continuing, the Gorham case was decided. With the decision given he fully agreed; but he thought it necessary to meet the whole question openly before his congregation, and endeavour, as was his custom, not to reconcile the opinions of both parties, or to steer a middle course between both, but to discover a higher truth, in which all that was true in the opposing views might be retained, and all that was false discarded. This was done, as he believed, in the two sermons which have been published.*

They created a great sensation in Brighton. They displeased, of course, both the extreme parties; but they reconciled to the Church many who had despaired of ever accepting the teaching of her Baptismal Services.

Thus within the short space of six months, which perhaps were the most important in their results on Brighton, and through his published sermons on the general public, he had—not with that pharisaic liberalism which thanks God that it is not as other men are—not from the desire of being peculiar—not with any thought of self, but from faithful following and brave speaking of what he believed to be true—put himself into opposition with the whole accredited theological world of

beware! Beware of letting thy fellow-scholars mark what thou perceivest afar, or what thou art beginning to see!

69. 'Until these weaker fellow-scholars are up with thee, rather return once more back into this Primer, and examine whether that which thou takest only for duplicates of the method, for a blunder in the teaching, is not, perhaps, something more.'

* Vol. ii. pp. 45–61.

Brighton on the questions of the Sabbath, the Atonement, Inspiration, and Baptism. The results were sad and dreary for him. His words were garbled; passages from his sermons divorced from their context, were quoted against him; persons who could not understand him came to hear him and look at him, as a strange phenomenon; he became the common talk of all the theological tea-tables of the town. People were solemnly warned against him; those who knew little of his doctrines, and less of himself, attacked him openly, with an apparently motiveless bitterness. He had dared to be different from the rest of the world, and that in itself was revolutionary. He was called Neologian, Socialist, Sceptic: all the cruel armoury of fanaticism, and especially the weapon of blind terror, was used against him.

In December 1849, he writes—

It is not all smooth sailing. Indeed, the bitterness and virulence of which I hear in every direction are quite unaccountable . . . and women are even more violent in their bitterness than men. Once these things moved me: it is strange how little I care for them now. Once I met them with defiance, and scorn for scorn: now I wonder they ever could have provoked me. I desire to be as meek and gentle under dispraise and dislike as I am indifferent to flattery. O that I could breathe the Spirit of Him who, when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered, threatened not! For, in His case, *all* was undeserved; but I cannot tell how much, in my case, rashness and pride have irritated people. This, however, I have learnt—that three years of perpetual warfare with the world,

and the repayal of hatred for love, were no trifling endurance. To simply bear the dislike which had been provoked, was not so difficult; but to persevere in exasperating it day by day, and never flinch even when His loving spirit sank and flagged in the wilderness, and in Gethsemane, and still go on, till hatred did its worst—oh! I think I know what that must have been to a loving spirit, when I so felt it with a stern one!

And on January 1, 1850, he writes, speaking of the sermon on the death of the Queen Dowager—

The sermon will be published, I expect, this week. It will be some time before I rush into print again; and that was not the sermon to have selected. It has nothing in it—at least, nothing that I know of—good or bad; though, I doubt not, the heretic-hunters will find plenty of tendencies towards Mahometanism, Red Republicanism, Puseyism, and Swedenborgianism. I was tormented into publishing, and in an evil hour of weakness gave way, for which weakness I now feel the twinges of remorse. How long will sermonising continue? With all my heart, I hope not to the end of life, unless life is very nearly done; for it is a kind of mean martyrdom by a lingering death, like the benevolent system of roasting at a slow fire, in which the good Christian people of former times manifested the extent of their Christian proficiency.

Thus, a partaker of the destiny of those who dare to preach Truth higher and more spiritual than is recognised by the teachers of their time, he stood apart—a very solitary man. On the last day of 1849, he preached on the loneliness of Christ. The sermon (vol. i.) was an unconscious but vivid portrait of his own career and life; it was written with the blood of his own heart. And no one can be astonished, who places himself in his position, and realises his ultra-sensitiveness,

at the summing-up of his work at Brighton, written in February 1850. It is almost needless to say that this summing-up, though true to his own point of view, was not in reality true. His labours had been most successful; the greater part of his congregation were devoted to him; he was reverenced and loved by them with an unobtrusive reverence and a silent love, which were too deep to be openly expressed. But this very silence of affection and veneration, so different from the loud applause given generally to a popular preacher, he, most strangely, almost wilfully, refused to recognise. He only saw in the mass of congregation those who came to criticise or sneer, or to listen to him as a stump-orator; he only heard the slander, the bitter speaking, the theological clamour of his opponents. To all the rest he was blind and deaf. He sums up thus, in a most touching manner, his life:—

February 11, 1850.

A year has passed, nearly, since I resolved to live above this world. O God! how little has been done! High, bright, enthusiastic hopes of things impossible, and of things possible still, how they teemed in my imagination! The ideal, of course, always transcends the actual, and now experience of life again, with its manifold struggles, 'fallings from us, vanishings,' has left a sobered, saddened, but unconquerable resolve to live in earnest.

Life is real, life is earnest,
And the grave is not its goal;
'Dust thou art, to dust returnest,'
Was not written of the soul.

Farewell, all visions and wishes of distinction—farewell to them for ever! But not farewell to something holier and better,

far lowlier, and more worthy of beings whose divine spark is mixed with clay. I can hear in my heart the 'still sad music of humanity,' and selfishness seems to me even more contemptible than it did, now that I am more distinctly conscious of an end to live for. *My* career is done. And yet I do not look on life with any bitter or disappointed feeling, but gently and even gratefully. I read the last stanza of Wordsworth's 'Intimations of Immortality from the Recollections of Childhood,' which have something of the subdued and chastened feeling which I am beginning to realise :—

> Though nothing can bring back the hour
> Of splendour in the grass, or glory in the flower, &c.

I am not sorry that the wild throb of romantic, boyish anticipation of a future can never be felt again. I know the realities of a world of error now, but whose Maker's name I am profoundly convinced is Love. I feel its grand, sad laws, and I bow myself to them submissively, not wishing them other than they are.

These were his thoughts in March 1850. It was now, while everything connected with him had a curious interest for the little world of Brighton, that the Institute for Working Men, to the welfare of which he had united himself from the beginning, began to suffer from internal dissension. He had long foreseen the possibility of this. There was a radical error, in his opinion, in the constitution of the society. In his preface to the 'Address on the Question of the Introduction of Sceptical Publications into the Library of the Institute' he states this error clearly, and its results. After narrating the origin of the institute and its objects, he proceeds: —

It was, of course, foreseen that the rock on which such a plan might be wrecked, would be any successful effort to divert the funds and machinery of the institute from its original intention to the purposes of a political party.

But, in this case, the withdrawal of all well-disposed persons would leave the association to dwindle till it became quite extinct. For its very existence depended upon numbers. The experiment, therefore, appeared to be a perfectly safe one, inasmuch as perversion of its purposes must inevitably be followed quickly by annihilation.

One fatal oversight (such, at least, it appears to the author of these pages) in the constitution of the society realised the foreseen danger. It had been justly held that the working men ought to have in their own hands the management of their own society, lest the smallest suspicion should arise that there was any desire in those who were their benefactors to coerce or trammel them. Every attempt at interference was scrupulously avoided. All this was wise and just. But beyond this, not only was the domination of the upper classes made impossible, but even their assistance and advice excluded, by making honorary members incompetent to vote or act on committee; a mistake which originated in an over-scrupulous generosity on the part of one who suggested it, but fatal, because false in principle.

To have vested the power of unlimited control or rule in the richer classes, would have been a surrender of the very principle on which the plan rested. But to reject all co-operation and assistance from them, to receive their contributions and refuse their advice, was to create and foster a spirit, not of manly, but of jealous independence, and to produce in a new form that vicious state of relationship between class and class which is at this day the worst evil in our social life—the repulsion of the classes of society from each other at all points except one, so as to leave them touching at the single point of pecuniary interest. And thus the cementing

principle of society is declared to be the spirit of selfishness—the only spirit which is essentially destructive. A fatal blunder!

It was on Thursday, March 28, that the proposition to admit infidel publications was discussed in a meeting of the members of the Institute. He wished to go, and 'to impart,' as he said, 'a healthier tone, if possible;' but on the same night he writes—

I did not attend the meeting of the Working Men's Association, as I told you I had intended, and am almost sorry I did not; but some of the committee were afraid for me of violence and rudeness from the Socialists, and thought, too, that even if I swayed the vote by a speech against the infidel publications, they would only say that it had been done by the influence of priestcraft. On this consideration I left them to fight the battle for themselves, and I sincerely hope that they have got a signal victory. But I find by enquiry that Socialism has made terrible strides in England: Louis Blanc's views are progressing swiftly. They say we must get rid of the superstitious notion of an invisible God. Till that is done, nothing can be effected. And then, of course, Communism and a scramble for property ensue.

A strong Radical told me that he can remember the time when Toryism was in the ascendant in public meetings here, and the Radicals only just able to make head against it. Then Radicalism became triumphant; but now Radicalism is to Socialism what Toryism was to Radicalism—a kind of feeble aristocracy which can scarcely show its head, so completely is it put down by the ultra-socialism of Louis Blanc's school.

A few days afterwards he writes again—

I have been all the morning interrupted by deliberations respecting the affairs of the Working Men's Institute, which is in terrible disorder. Poor —— is dead! and there is no one

to stem the torrent of infidelity but myself. I am going to make a desperate attempt in a public address.

It was almost imperative that he should do so, for he was bound up with the interests of the Institute. He felt that he was personally compromised by its proceedings. He felt that the whole cause of the elevation of the working man was in jeopardy. He would not be silent. He asked no advice of either party; alone, he took the whole responsibility of a public address. It was a great responsibility. For, on the one hand, there was the large minority of sceptical and socialist members in the institute, who would call his effort 'priestcraft,' and prate about being lorded over by a clergyman and a gentleman, and perhaps attempt personal violence; and, on the other hand, outside of the Institute, there were not only those who, exasperated against him already, were likely to become more so by the bold way in which he felt he ought to speak, but also others, who, having seen enthusiastic folly in the whole scheme from the beginning, would now think this last attempt to save a sinking ship the crowning folly.

With that fine confidence so characteristic of him, he threw himself upon the sense and candour of the men.

His speech was long remembered for its tact. The great room of the Town Hall was crowded to excess. Every class in Brighton was represented in the audience. All the working men of the Institute were there. The large minority of sceptical socialists had come determined to make a disturbance—to hoot him down. They had dispersed themselves in parties throughout the room.

He began very quietly, with a slow, distinct, and self-restrained utterance. He explained the reason of the meeting. When he spoke of himself as the person who had summoned them—as one who was there to oppose the introduction of the infidel books, knots of men started up to interrupt him ; a few hisses and groans were heard ; but the undaunted bearing of the man, the calm voice and musical flow of pauseless speech, powerful to check unregulated violence by its regulated quietude of utterance, went on, and they could but sit down again. Again and again, from different parts of the room, a man would suddenly spring to his feet and half begin to speak, and then, as if ashamed or awed, subside. There were murmurs, passionate shuffling of feet, a sort of electricity of excitement, which communicated itself from the excited men to every one in the room. At last, when he said, 'You have heard of a place called Coward's Castle—Coward's Castle is that pulpit or platform, from which a man surrounded by his friends, in the absence of his opponents, secure of applause, and safe from a reply, denounces those who differ from him,' there was a dead stillness. He had struck the thought of the turbulent—the very point on which, in reference to the address, they had enlarged ; and from that moment there was not a word, scarcely a cheer, till the last sentence was given. It seemed, said one of them, and what he said was confirmed by others, as if every man in the room were thrilling with the same feelings, as if a magnetic power flowing from the speaker had united them all to himself, and in him to one another. The address was

the most remarkable of all his speeches for eloquence, if eloquence be defined as the power of subjugating men by bold and persuasive words. It was remarkable for two other reasons which may not occur to the ordinary reader. First, in it he revealed much of his inner life and character. He was forced by the circumstances under which he made the address to speak of himself. The personal explanations into which he entered were an overt self-revelation. But there was one passage in the address in which, without the knowledge of his hearers, he disclosed the history of the most momentous period of his life. It has been already quoted (p. 111), and is the most important passage in all his works for anyone to study who wishes to know what he suffered, and how strongly he emerged from his suffering at the great religious turning-point of his life. Few men thought, as he delivered those magnificent sentences with stern and suppressed emotion, that they were forged in the fire of his own heart. But all did feel that he was disclosing to them the central principle of his whole life, the result of all his past religious struggle, when he spoke the following words :—'I refuse to permit discussion this evening respecting the love a Christian man bears to his Redeemer—a love more delicate far than the love which was ever borne to sister, or the adoration with which he regards his God—a reverence more sacred than man ever bore to mother.'

This address is also remarkable, because in it he boldly threw down the gauntlet to his opponents. It was not only an address to the working men, it was an

address to the whole of Brighton. Perhaps he did not do this consciously. But those who knew the state of feeling against him which has been described above, felt that he was making his apology, not in the sense of a recantation, but in the same sense as Socrates made his apology before the Athenian people. He was out of the pulpit. He could speak more freely. He appeared not so much as the clergyman as the man. It was remarked by more than one that he wore a black cravat. When he said that infidelity was often the cry of narrowness against an old truth under a new and more spiritual form—sometimes the charge caught up at second-hand, and repeated as a kind of religious hue-and-cry, in profoundest ignorance of the opinions that are so characterised—when he denounced the 'religious' newspapers —when he said, 'I have learned to hold the mere *charge* of infidelity very cheap'—when he poured pity, instead of anathemas, on Shelley, because 'God was represented to him as a demon, and Christianity as a system of exclusion and bitterness'—when he declared that the existence of God could not be demonstrated to the *Understanding*—when he defended himself for having said that there was 'a moral significance in the works of Dickens,' and called the objection 'cant'—when he spoke of the taunts which he had heard levelled against 'his friends the working men,' and his connection with them—when he refused to join in the cry of men, terror-stricken by events upon the Continent, that to instruct the working men and to side with them was giving sinews to infidelity and socialism,—he was in

reality appealing to the general public against the private clamour which had been raised against his teaching, and boldly asserting that he stood undismayed by his opinions; that, in spite of all, he would not bate one inch, but steer right onward. And as such it was accepted. Many men who had taken up the blind clamour against him, listened, and went away saying, 'That is a true man; a man different from that which I imagined him to be; a man with whom I do not agree, but in the attack against whom I will join no more.' The manliness of Brighton, even where it differed most widely from him, was, after that address, always on his side. Nor was the mode in which he made this defence unworthy of himself or of a Christian man. It was daring, determined, but in spirit gentle. Speaking of the suspicion, misrepresentation, and personal dislike he had incurred, he says —

> I do not say this in bitterness. I hold it to be a duty to be liberal and generous even to the illiberal and narrow-minded. And it seems to me a pitiful thing for any man to aspire to be true and to speak truth, and then to complain in astonishment that truth has not crowns to give, but thorns; but I say it in order that you and I may understand each other.

The result of the address on the members of the Institute was more successful than he had expected. Some of the sceptical minority were convinced that they were wrong; the rest separated in a body, and, carrying off with them a large portion of the library and property, established a new society, which did not long exist. The majority, alone with some waverers who were con-

firmed into truer views of social questions, combined to carry out the views of Mr. Robertson. The first thing done was to rescind the old rule that no gentlemen were to be admitted to vote or act on the committee, and to reconstruct the association on this amended footing; the second was to ask Mr. Robertson to be their new president. The two following letters will show how readily he entered into the difficulties which beset the first, and how wisely he refused the second:—

No. 1.

I will pledge myself, if your society is formed, and contains in it the elements of vitality, to give either an opening address or a lecture before the close of the year.

But it seems to me a matter of great importance that public attention should not be ostentatiously called again so soon to your efforts at self-restoration, so long as they are only efforts. If the institute is needed, really craved, and earnestly desired by the working men, they will enrol themselves in sufficient numbers to insure its existence without the excitement of an address. If they would not without this, then I am sure that to attempt to secure their adhesion by such means would be very dangerous.

On the former occasion nearly 700, in a fit of transient enthusiasm; joined themselves, I believe, and (out of about 1,300) withdrew directly after. If artificial means are necessary to preserve its existence, then the society will soon die a natural death; and we should be again covered with the shame of an abortive attempt. The cause of the working men cannot *afford* this. Better fail silently than make another public confession of incapacity.

Now, an address at present would draw the attention of the town. It would perhaps induce waverers to join, as all public

excitement does; and it might secure immediate ready money. But these are trifles compared with the risk of the withdrawal of many soon after. And suppose that enough to support did not join?

Let me propose therefore—Begin your society as soon and as quietly as possible; that is, as quietly as is consistent with that publicity which is necessary to acquaint the working men with the fact of a new association being in process of formation. If sufficient members do not present themselves, then the thing quietly dies away till a better opportunity; and be sure that no artificial excitement could have given it permanence, though it might have caused a premature abortive birth.

After some months, if the association lives with internal strength, then we may try external aids. I, for my part, pledge myself as I have said. But the great lesson for us all, in these days of puffing advertisements, is to learn to work silently and truly, and to leave self-advertisement and self-puffing to people who are on the verge of bankruptcy.

No. 2.

In reply to your letter of this day, I may briefly say that the idea of my accepting the presidentship of the Institute is quite out of the question. I do not consider myself competent for such an office, nor am I sure that it would be to the advantage of the society. . . . . I believe I could assist the members more truly, at all events more independently, in a subordinate position. Prominence and power are things for which I have no taste.

I am *very* anxious that there should be no second failure, but I think that the greatest wisdom and experience are needful to prevent it. . . . . The working men have shown that even a right-minded majority is unable to protect itself against a turbulent minority, without the introduction of other elements of society to support them—to support, not dictate; for I should be very sorry to see a majority of gentlemen on

the committee. But they want some, of weight and wisdom, to fall back upon. And, indeed, this is the only true democratic principle to my mind—not an oligarchy of the poorest, but a fusion of ranks, with such weight allowed, under checks, as is due to superior means of acquiring information.

What grieves me to the heart is to see distrust in the minds of working men of those wealthier than themselves; and nothing is more mischievous or unchristian than to gain popularity with them by fostering these feelings, and insinuating that the clergy and the religious and the rich are their enemies, or only espouse their cause for an end.

I must not accept any high office: I am their friend, but I want nothing from them—not even influence, nor their praise.

If I can do them even a little good, well; but for their sakes I must not take anything which could leave on one of their minds the shadow of a shade of a suspicion of my motives.

The society, after working admirably for some years has lately, to the great regret of many, been closed for want of support. It does not appear, after Mr. Robertson's death, to have been taken up by any person, with the exception of Mr. Ross, outside of the actual sphere of the working men.

After the delivery of the above-mentioned address, Mr. Robertson did not appear in public, except in the pulpit, for many months.

The end of 1850 is celebrated for the mistake which the Church of Rome made, and for the short and foolish blaze of excitement kindled by it in England. The mistake of the Church of Rome was, in departing from the quiet method of conversion they had been using. The foolishness of the English people was in making a great noise, only to end in the pretentious nonentity of

the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill. Brighton was, of course, convulsed. Platforms and pulpits rang with a jangle of denunciations. The only man who seems to have kept his head was Mr. Robertson. His speech at the 'great meeting' was a model of good sense and calm knowledge; a quiet protest against what he called, with fine irony and with accurate acquaintance with ecclesiastical history, 'an act of schism on the part of the Church of Rome.' What he thought privately of the whole matter will be found in the following extracts:—

This foolish act of the Pope has made Protestants nearly beside themselves with terror. Already they see the fires of Smithfield lighted, thumbscrews at work, and the 'mystery' of the Apocalypse throned at Canterbury. We have a great meeting here on Thursday, to which I look forward, only expecting a vast deal of foolish talking, and perhaps recrimination, bandied back against the Church of England. Here have the bishops been coquetting with semi-Popery for fifteen years, but the moment it assumes an attitude invasive of their spiritual privileges, 'the Right Reverend Fathers in God' rise as one man, the noble champions of the faith, and, much as they dislike controversial preaching, recommend all their clergy to preach, disseminate tracts, &c., against the 'mother of abominations,' and so forth. On Sunday I could not help saying, at the end of my sermon, 'I have purposely abstained from entering on the subject upon which the public mind is nearly frantic; I could easily have roused your indignation and inflamed passions, but for myself I do not like that kind of work. Assume, if you will, in the week, the attitude of defiance; but let us, for one Sabbath-day, keep free from that, and take the attitude of humiliation.' The subject of the sermon was, 'I am a sinful man, O Lord!'

Thursday.

To-day was spent in a long-protracted meeting at the Town Hall, on the subject of the Papal division of England into dioceses; it was crammed to the window-sills. I went determined not to say a word; but, after two persons had spoken, several voices called out my name: this was repeated so often, becoming clamorous at last, that in the close of the day, in an evil hour, I rose. I heartily wish now I had not, for I was unprepared and hampered, partly by seeing a Romanist there, a former friend, for whom my heart winced at every severe expression, and partly from disagreement with the words of the address. Afterwards I had a long conversation with M—— (discussion, rather), which lasted until two or three in the morning. At last I said, 'Now, M——, it is not often one man lets another see the core of his heart: I do not mean to let you see mine, but I have told you much of my views. You know what I do not believe, and what I do. You would call my creed meagre—I call it large, for there are many points on which I am in perplexity. What I believe, I believe strongly. You have heard me preach, too. You saw that crowd; you know what it costs me to address them; now tell me, as an old friend, would you advise me to go on or retire?' He said, with enthusiasm, 'I do not hesitate one moment—go on. I tell you frankly, there were points in your sermon I did not quite agree with. I wished the evangelical element had been there; but I felt, if it were only there—no, I cannot tell you what I feel, for it would look like extravagant flattery. I will only say, I felt it would be a glorious thing for a man to stand up as you stand in a place like Brighton: but, never mind, perhaps it is better as it is. Men come to hear you who would not come if you thought as I do.' I verily believed that if M—— had only said 'Retire,' I should have retired forthwith.

The year closed for him heavily. His health had

visibly decayed. He suffered keenly, though he denied it, from the loneliness of his position. A gloom deepened over his heart. But now and then a gleam of happiness shot across his spirit when he learnt that he had done some good to a human soul. Two letters which touched him greatly are inserted here; they complete the history of this period:—

An Anonymous Letter, enclosing a Present of 10*s.*

Rev. Sir,—An humble individual begs the acceptance of the enclosed as an Easter offering, and as a grateful acknowledgment, in some sort, for the many wise lessons he has received of truth, honour, charity, and love; and for the hope of immortality with which he is *now* impressed, which has begotten a cheerfulness of mind to which for years he has been a stranger.

May God in His infinite mercy long spare you to us in health and prosperity, and bless you! is the sincere wish of, faithfully yours,

The Writer.

An Anonymous Letter, accompanying a pair of Candlesticks, the work of the Writer.

Sir,—A humble individual, desirous of acknowledging the *unflinching* kindness you have shown towards the working classes of this town, begs the acceptance of the enclosed; and, in doing so, he hopes you will pardon what I am afraid you will think an un-English way of sending a note without a name. My apology must be, that as you do not know me, you will not put any wrong construction as to my motive in doing so. Nothing but the profoundest respect would have induced me to take the liberty I have.

Believing you to be a *man* as well as a gentleman, that you can come down to the level of working men, and *understand*

them (a rare qualification now-a-days in one in the class that circumstances have placed you), all working men think it so much the more valuable to have your advice and assistance. May it long be continued!

I do not complain that we have not the sympathy of the upper classes. I believe we have; but there is not one in fifty that can come down to our circumstances, to the bond of our common nature—to comprehend that although the mechanic and artisan of this country are deep thinkers, yet they often stand in need of advice and the assistance that education gives. We have their good wishes and pecuniary assistance—thanks for it—but sometimes a little kindly advice would do far more. It is this difference that makes us feel we could grasp you by the hand as a brother in the cause of progress of the nation. Would that there were more such! How much more would true religion, morals, and sound intellect be brought out! No fear then of the Pope or the devil.

Believe me, Sir, I am very respectfully yours.

Letters from Oct. 1849 *to Dec.* 1850.

XXXIX.

October 17, 1849.

I have just finished 'Feats on the Fiord.' Miss Martineau's graphic powers are uncommon. I seem to see a Fiord, like a valley spread with water into the land; the vast flocks of wild fowl; the sun only dipping in summer below the horizon; the outline of the reindeer on the mountain, cut against the sky, and the Lapp slyly running off with the cheese laid on the mountain-ridge as an offering to Nipen. A Lapp's hut must, I think, resemble an Alp for filth, and be somewhat like it altogether. An Alp is a Tyrolese herdsman's hut. On the mountains there are patches of vegetation among the pine-forests; these in winter are covered with

snow, but in the summer months afford pasture for cattle. The herdsmen ascend, having under their charge the cows of several lowland farmers. Each superintends the cattle of many farms. They milk them, make cheese, and at the end of the season each farmer receives a number of cheeses, in proportion to the number of cows that he contributes. I never knew what filth was until I tried to breakfast, when chamois-hunting, in an Alp. I had taken bread with me, and endeavoured to improve it by the addition of cream, butter, and cheese; but the room was nearly ankle-deep in dirt, the human beings in it scarcely tolerable within six yards; the cream black and white in about equal proportions, from the soot which had fallen in; the butter kneaded up with hair, as mortar sometimes is; and the cheese yielded to scarcely anything less violent than a hatchet. I fancy the four-feet-high Lapps would feel quite at home in an Alp.

What I like in Miss Martineau, too, is her genial heart—her willingness to 'live and let live.' She feels the falsehood and the injury of religious superstitions. She has no false sentiment about their romantic beauty. They take the manhood from the breast, the self-reliance and the trust in God—leaving behind a restless attempt to propitiate fickle, capricious, malicious beings, whose only superiority lies in power. The worship of power singly is always a degrading worship; submission to caprice is always demoralising—submission producing trickiness, subtlety, and trust in cunning rather than in rectitude. All this Miss Martineau sees; yet, whether it be heathen or Christian superstition, she nearly always has a healthy and just allowance for the necessary admixture of error with all that is human, and sees that not by anathemas, but by gradual enlightenment, such errors are to be expelled. In short, she sees the difference between pernicious error and wilful vice.

I began that book at sunrise, and finished it a little after breakfast-time. It gave me a healthy glow of feeling, a more cheerful view of life. I believe the writer of that book

would rejoice that she had soothed and invigorated one day of a wayworn, tired being in his path to the Still Country, where the heaviest-laden lays down his burden at last, and has Rest.

Yet, thank God! there is rest—many an interval of saddest, sweetest rest—even here, when it seems as if evening breezes from that other land, laden with fragrance, played upon the cheeks and lulled the heart. There are times, even on the stormy sea, when a gentle whisper breathes softly as of heaven, and sends into the soul a dream of ecstasy which can never again wholly die, even amidst the jar and whirl of waking life. How such whispers make the blood stop and the very flesh creep with a sense of mysterious communion! How singularly such moments are the epochs of life—the few points that stand out prominently in the recollection after the flood of years has buried all the rest, as all the low shore disappears, leaving only a few rock-points visible at high-tide!

XL.

October 18, 1849.

I have been pondering over your question as to the probable effect of tragedies such as 'Phédre,' &c., upon the mind. Now, Aristotle's deep view of the end of the tragic drama is this: that it aims, through the medium of two feelings which it represents in action—terror and fear—to refine those very feelings in the spectators. To refine, of course, means to take off the rudeness and painfulness of such emotions, and make them almost pleasing sensations. That is, the terrible and pathetic in real life are painful things to witness; but in the mimic representation the worst part is taken away by the consciousness that it is unreal, at the same time that it is sufficiently like life to produce an impression somewhat similar to that which would be called forth by reality. The feeling thus made faint becomes pleasurable, just as warmth is enjoyment, though heat be intolerable. Of course it is plain that this refinement of feeling unrealises it—unfits for

the contemplation of the terrible and pathetic in real life—substitutes the mimic emotion which is useless, a merely artificial production, for the true one which the Creator has appointed to rise in the bosom in such circumstances for the express purpose of leading to action, exciting sympathy, hardening against danger, and so on. A person who is refined by high-wrought scenes in novels is necessarily sure to shrink from such scenes in real life, because in the mimic case he had all the excitement without the pain, and he will turn aside from circumstances where excitement cannot be had without pain. And such an one is sure to be found wanting when true feeling is required for use, because the feelings have got the habit of being roused, without leading to exertion. They have got this habit in the unreal, and they will keep to it in the real. They will rise at the sight of distress or pain: but they have never been trained to pass promptly into the work of sympathising and relieving, and accordingly such persons seem and come to be looked upon as callous amidst the trials of others over which they wept in the romance. This, I fancy, is Aristotle's 'refinement' of feeling, and this must be the danger in all refinement of society. The tragedy and the romance, therefore, only begin to appear when the mind of a large portion of the nation is at leisure to cultivate hothouse feelings, which are always feeble monstrosities. The bull-fight and the amphitheatre only begin when war and the chase have ended. The emotions which found in these a healthy exercise once, get their unhealthy repast by seeing without any call for acting.

It is plain to me that in this way all such reading is injurious to the generality. All the feeling we can command we want for acting. When we come to act, the feeling is not there to make acting easy; and what we have to do we must either leave undone, or do with a cold heart, simply from having been accustomed to train the feelings to refinement, and not to action.

I wish that nature could do her own healthy work upon all our hearts. I could conceive a marvellously healing power to come from opening the soul, like a child's, to receive spontaneously, without effort, the impressions of the unliving—and yet how living!—world around us with all the awe that accompanies them.

> One impulse from a vernal wood
> Will teach you more of man,
> Of moral evil and of good,
> Than all the sages can.

Also I suspect that speculative philosophy is not good to read, however interesting; at all events, not alone. It has too little of a basis of proved fact to rest upon, and depends for its truth too much upon feeling. Positive science, such as chemistry, natural philosophy, mineralogy, and geology, rests on facts: and the effect of certainty which it produces on the mind is always a healthy feeling. Here again it is as I said above. The cure is to come in contact with Nature and with Fact, instead of exhausting strength by mighty blows struck at random on the yielding air, in the region of conjecture and bewildering mystery. I love that region; it is indeed the region of Faith, but it requires a brain practised much on more earthly precipices to avoid being dizzy and lost in the immense abyss.

XLI.

October 19.

I am convinced there is a deep truth in the strict view which many take of the observance of Sunday. I am *certain* that their arguments are wrong—that the Sabbath is not a perpetual obligation; that it was Jewish, and that it passed away with Christianity, which made all days and places holy.

Nevertheless, I am more and more sure by experience that the reason for the observance of the Sabbath lies deep in the everlasting necessities of human nature, and that as long as man is man the blessedness of keeping it not as a day of rest

only, but as a day of spiritual rest, will never be annulled. Almost everything may become an object of doubt, but, in the midst of a wilderness of shadows, broken and distorted in every way, of one thing I am certain—one thing is real, the life of God in the soul of man. I am quite sure that there is One who is seeking us rather than sought by us, that He will seek and find the earnest; and I am sure that this hidden communion may become an object of actual experience so soon as the seeking is reciprocal. If I have not yet acted on it, I know that not with the intellect, but with the spirit, man finds God; in other words, by that which is allied to God in our souls, we touch Him. The Jews required 'a sign,' that is, something that would prove God to their sensuous nature. The Greeks sought after wisdom; that is, by reason and mental tension they expected to realise the Divine: but St. Paul's conviction was, that the spiritual man alone—that is, the man who sought with his spirit—could understand the things of God. By the spirit, I suppose he means that which I called above, the part in our nature which is allied to God, which shows itself, not in cleverness and nimbleness of apprehension, but in devotion, in the submissive heart, in gentleness, humbleness, and love. I fancy that Sunday has lost its meaning, unless this part of our being is called into energy. I have been beating the air in vain with investigation. The true way was much nearer. Not by soaring high or diving low do we get the Anointer, but by something very near to us—trusting. Is not that the substance of those verses which so many people find difficult, Romans x. 6, 7, 8, 9?

I could not quite satisfy myself with the desolate feeling which instinctively I feel as often as you talk of resolving to fix your heart on God alone. Is not this that which ought to make me supremely happy? But as I was walking in the town to-day, in a back street, and musing over this, I detected the reason of it not doing so at once. God is Life, not Death: He is not to be found as the Legion-haunted tried to find Him,

among the tombs. I do think that the spirit in which you sometimes despondingly speak of living for Him alone, really means nothing more than the burial alive of a nun who is taking the black veil and thinking to become thus the spouse of Christ. You speak of living for God and with God, as if it were dying to all that is bright and cheering and beautiful and blessed. You speak as one would speak of going into a parish union, which is good only when there is nothing else to do. No wonder that, involuntarily and almost without a distinct analysis of the feeling, I feel a kind of shudder and a vague cheerlessness when you talk so. No, be *vouée* if you will, but it must be *au blanc*, with more cheerful and more grateful tones—not as if to serve God and to hear the eternal prison-doors clank behind you were identical. Serve Him, love Him, live to Him, and you will be bright and full of hope, and noble. 'They shall renew their strength.' The heart vainly pants 'for some celestial fruit, forbidden to our wants.' Yes, but how unjust and unreasonable to complain if our expectations are not fulfilled! A sailor, I fancy, would not have a right to count himself of a superior order of beings, if he sat dripping on a rock, and pined for wings instead of sails. Sails are not so swift as wings, and are much more coarse: but there is nothing for it but to patiently content himself with his limitations, and humbly follow in the wake of the laws of nature, making such use of wind and steam as the constitution of his being permits—and not look up, envying the sea-birds in the air. That will not get him on many knots an hour, I fancy. And besides, even with wings, *they* will live and die gulls; whereas the very limits that cramp *him* call out the energies of a day-by-day diviner manhood.

XLII.

My dear ——,—A woman's position is one of subjection, mythically described as a curse in the Book of Genesis. Well,

but I ween that all curses are blessings in disguise. Labour among thorns and thistles—man's best health. Woman's subjection? What say you to His? 'Obedient,' a 'servant;' *wherefore* God also hath highly exalted Him. Methinks a thoughtful, high-minded Woman would scarcely feel degraded by a lot which assimilates her to the divinest Man: 'He came not to be ministered unto, but to minister.' I have always conceived that you had learned to count that ministry the sublimest life which the world has seen, and its humiliation and subjection precisely the features which were most divine. The Greeks at Corinth wanted that part to be left out, and it was exactly that part which Paul would not leave out—Jesus Christ, but Jesus Christ *crucified*, which the Evangelicals rob of all its beauty. Trust me, a noble woman laying on herself the duties of her sex, while fit for higher things—the world has nothing to show more like the Son of Man than that. Do you remember Wordsworth's beautiful lines to Milton?—

> Thy soul was as a star, and dwelt apart;
> Thou hadst a voice whose sound was like the sea:
> Pure as the naked heavens, majestic, free,
> So didst thou travel on life's common way,
> In cheerful godliness: *and yet thy heart*
> *The lowliest duties on itself did lay.*

I do not know anything of Alfieri's 'Life.' By whom is it written? The misfortunes of genius, its false direction, its misery, I suppose rise partly from the fact of the life of genius being that which is chiefly given to the world. Many a soldier died as bravely and with as much suffering as Sir John Moore at Corunna; but every soldier had not a Wolfe to write his death-song. Many an innocent victim perished—yes, by hundreds of thousands—on the scaffolds of France, and in the dungeons of the robber barons, but they died silently. A few aristocrats whose shriek was loud have filled the world with pity at the tale of their suffering. Many a mediocre boy have I seen spoilt at school—many a commonplace destiny has

been marred in life: only these things are not matters of history. Peasants grow savage with domestic troubles, and washerwomen pine under brutal treatment: but the former are locked up for burying their misery in drunkenness—the latter die of a broken heart, with plenty of unwritten poetry lost among the soapsuds. I fancy the *inarticulate* sorrows are far more pitiable than those of an Alfieri, who has a tongue to utter them. Carlyle in this respect seems to me to hold a tone utterly diverse from that of the Gospel. The worship of the hero, that is his religion: condescension to the small and unknown, that was His!

A little plan which I have found serviceable in past years, is to put down every night the engagements and duties of the next day, arranging the hours well. The advantages of this are several. You get more done than if a great part of each day is spent in contriving and considering 'what next?' A healthful feeling pervades the whole of life. There is a feeling of satisfaction at the end of the day on finding that, generally, the greater part of what is planned has been accomplished. This is the secret of giving dignity to trifles. As units they are insignificant; they rise in importance when they become parts of a plan. Besides this—and I think the most important thing of all—there is gained a consciousness of Will, the opposite of that which is the sense of impotency. The thought of time, to me at least, is a very overpowering and often a very annihilating one for energy: Time rushing on, unbroken, irresistible, hurrying the worlds and the ages into being, and out of it, and making our 'noisy years seem moments in the *being* of the eternal Silence.' The sense of powerlessness which this gives is very painful. But I have felt that this is neutralised by such a little plan as that. You feel that you do control your own course; you are borne on, but not resistlessly. Down the rapids you go, certainly, but you are steering and trimming your own raft, and making the flood of Time your vassal, and not your conqueror. I first, I think,

began this plan after reading a valuable little book, and a sunny, cheerful one, Abbott's 'Way to do Good.' It has been omitted for years, but I have begun it again these last few days.

'There is nothing in the drudgery of domestic duties to soften,'—you quote that. No, but a great deal to strengthen with the sense of duty done, self-control and power. Besides, you cannot calculate how much corroding rust is *kept off*—how much of disconsolate, dull despondency is hindered. Daily use is not the jeweller's mercurial polish: but it will keep your little silver pencil from tarnishing.

I have been interrupted by the visit of a lady of my congregation, who came to take leave; one, it appears, who has been warmly attached to the instruction given there. She told me the delight, the tears of gratitude, which she had witnessed in a poor girl to whom, in passing, I gave a kind look on going out of church on Sunday. What a lesson! How cheaply happiness can be given! What opportunities we miss of doing an angel's work! I remember doing it, full of sad feelings, passing on, and thinking no more about it; and it gave an hour's sunshine to a human life, and lightened the load of life to a human heart—for a time!

XLIII.

October 24.

I have just returned from Lady G——'s—a party of ten or twelve to dinner. Conversation after, chiefly military, turning on Indian battles; so I talked. Afterwards had a discussion with Mr. —— about the post-office regulation of transmitting letters on Sunday, in opposition to which there is to be a meeting to-morrow. I maintained the difficulty of the question: he asserted its facility. I instanced the case of my being thrown out for the last train on Saturday night; what would have been done had there been no train on Sunday morning? The inestimable value of a day of physical repose

and spiritual rest is granted; but the details of that must be modified by circumstances. Sailors must work a ship on Sundays; ships must arrive on Sundays; battles must be fought; news must travel. Life and death, or—what is equivalent—property to an immense amount, must often be involved, if the business of a great country, and much of the correspondence, receives a sudden shock in the metropolis and all country towns. Two days in the week there would be no delivery. Moreover, it is a matter of degree. The question is not an easy one. For, on the other hand, the compulsory working of so many thousands on the day of rest is almost identical with smothering the life of religion in the soul. I certainly do feel by experience the eternal obligation because of the eternal necessity of the Sabbath. The soul withers without it; it thrives in proportion to the fidelity of its observance. Nay, I even believe the stern rigour of the Puritan Sabbath had a grand effect upon the soul. Fancy a man thrown in upon himself, with no permitted music, nor relaxation, nor literature, nor secular conversation—nothing but his Bible, his own soul, and God's silence! What hearts of iron this system must have made. How different from our stuffed-arm-chair religion and 'gospel of comfort'! as if to be made comfortable were the great end of religion. I am persuaded, however, that the Sabbath must rest not on an enactment, but on the necessities of human nature. It is necessary not because it is commanded; but it is commanded because it is necessary. If the Bible says, 'Eat the herb of the field,' self-sustenance does not become a duty in consequence of the enactment, but the enactment is only a statement of the law of human nature. And so with the Sabbath, and this appears to be a truer and a far more impregnable base to place it on. For as to the enactment, great part of it is indisputably dispensed with. The day, the mode of observance, the manner of computing the twenty-four hours from twelve to twelve, or from sunset to sunset. If these be ceremonial, who is to prove

that the number one in seven is not ceremonial too, and that it might not be changed for one in ten? If all this is got rid of, and 'no manner of work' is construed to permit hot dinners and fly-driving on the Sabbath, then it is only an arbitrary distinction to call any other part or even the whole of it of moral and eternal instead of ceremonial obligation. You cannot base it on a law: but you can show that the law was based on an eternal fitness. There I think it never can be dislodged.

XLIV.

I have been dining at Mr. E——'s, and escaped at 9.20; a pleasant party enough; that is, there were a good many intelligent men, and the conversation was of a better order than usual. Mr. E—— remarked, in conversation, that our Lord never once used irony. I alleged Mark vii. 9: 'Full *well* ye reject,' &c., which, after a long discussion, and the production of Greek Testaments, &c., was universally admitted to be decisive. Then came the maxim, that the indignation expressed by Him against hypocrisy was no precedent for us, inasmuch as he spoke as a Divine person. A gentleman of the name of —— —— maintained this. I contended that it was human, and that if a man did not feel something of the same spirit under similar circumstances, if his blood could not boil with indignation, nor the syllable of withering justice rise to his lips, he could not even conceive His spirit. Mr. E—— agreed to this, to my surprise, and told an anecdote. 'Could you not have felt indignation for that, Robertson?' My blood was at the moment running fire—not at his story, however; and I remembered that I had once in my life stood before my fellow-creature with words that scathed and blasted; once in my life I felt a terrible might: I knew, and rejoiced to know, that I was inflicting the sentence of a coward's and a liar's hell.

I feel most as I should be when my mind is in the attitude of—do you remember the dear old simile of Shelley, which I have not quoted for so long, though it has been again and again in my meditations; that I used to quote so often? There is something in the feeling of that simile that is quite after my own heart: the solemn night, the purity of the thread of light, the divine compassion of the placid Thing above, the quiet devoted sadness, of the solitary inhabitant of night and air below, a butterfly in all but gaudiness. No, I have not given the serene feeling and sacred sensations of the simile. It is quite peculiar, and I have repeated it to myself a thousand times. Resignation was the word I wanted. The homage of resignation beneath the clear pale sky of night, with Eternity and Immensity all round, imparting themselves to the look upwards. It is all in vain, I do not express it. Shelley's single line says it all. The sound of the words responds to the thought and image which they suggest. I cannot tell you what a stillness they produce in me, and how entirely, more than anything I know, they *image* what I feel.

I have been asked to go to Switzerland, and a man ought to go there to feel intensely at least once in his life. The only question is, it will scarcely be possible for me to exceed seven Sundays of absence.

I fear it is not possible, but what a dream! The valley of Rosenlaui, that loveliest of earthly spots; the stern grandeur of the Grimsel, where the wildest and loneliest thoughts were in my heart four years ago; and the fall of the Aar at Handek, where I got a sensation new in life; or the spots of the Tyrol, where I wandered for long weeks alone. For a time I almost think I would give up the rest of the year, anything for that. But, no; a few weeks soon pass, though they leave behind a memory which tints all existence, and apparently absorb all existence into themselves.

XLV.

My dear —,—I implore you, do not try morphine ever; no, not once. I will trust you not to do so, not to take any opiate whatever. I ask it humbly. Pledge me your word that you will honourably comply with this, in the letter and in the spirit too. It is a wicked and cowardly attempt to rule the spirit by the flesh. It is beneath you. If you do it I can honour you no longer; the results upon the system are slow, sure, and irreparable, and the habit grows until it is unconquerable. I am deeply, anxiously in earnest. You are not worthy the fidelity of my friendship if you try to drown misery in that way. Except in the grossness of the effect, where is the difference between the opiate and the dram? Do you not know what keeps the gin palaces open?—Misery! The miserable go there to forget. You must not, and shall not do it, for it is degradation. I would have you condescend to no miserable materialism to escape your sorrow. Remember what Maria Theresa said when she began to doze in dying, 'I want to meet my God awake.' Remember that He refused the medicated opiate on the cross. Meet misery awake. May I borrow sacred words: 'Having begun in the spirit, do not be made perfect through the flesh.' Summon the force to bear out of your own heart, and the divine that dwells there —not out of a laudanum bottle. I have spoken ruggedly, but not rudely. Forgive me; I am not myself to-night; I would gladly sustain the depression I feel by opiate, or by anything else; but I resist, because it is despicable.

XLVI.

Another Sunday done: crowded congregations, pulpit steps even full, ante-room nearly so. Morning, the Sabbath subject; the afternoon, the conclusion of Acts xviii. I sat in church, thinking, 'Now, how this crowd would give many men

pleasure, flatter their hearts with vanity, or fill them with honest joy. How strange that it is given to one who cannot enjoy it, who takes no pains to keep it, who would gladly give all up, and feels himself in the midst of all a homeless and heartless stranger.' In the afternoon, for a few minutes, some gentler thoughts came, and there was a rush of warmer, perhaps better feeling in some parts of my sermon where I was speaking of Apollos' character—brilliant and gifted, yet sitting humbly to be taught by Priscilla; and also where St. Paul taking a vow seemed to indicate that there was in his heart a lingering attachment to the ceremonies, and even the superstitions, hallowed by early associations.

* * * * * *

—— has been here since eight o'clock. He had been reading Fichte's 'Blessed Life.' We had a long talk about it; he is but a beginner in these matters, but was deeply interested. I will tell you a thought which came out in conversation, and which I expressed. Fichte seems to discountenance attachment to the individual and the visible. The clinging which to cut away would be cutting the heart to the quick, he would call an indication of a mind not set on the Invisible. And yet how is this? Then they who feel least, and attach themselves least, are the religious of the earth. The gentlest and tenderest, who have forgotten self in the being of another, are consoled with the pleasing assurance, that 'they have neither part nor lot' in the blessed life. And he, whose tears flowed so freely over the grave of friendship, and over his country's doomed metropolis, who loved John with so peculiar and selective an attachment—what are we to say of Him? Oh! it cannot be. It cannot be, that God has given us beings here to love, and that to love them intensely is idolatry. I can understand self-annihilation for another dearer than self; but I cannot understand the annihilation of those dear affections, nor the sacrifice of a bleeding heart at the shrine of Him whose name is Love. I do not, however, comprehend anything of the

matter. It is all dark. I do not understand why the tenderer the heart is, the more it is exposed to being torn, and rent, and tortured. Separations, bereavements, deaths, broken hearts—there is something very stern in the aspect of this world, when you penetrate below the superficial smile it wears, very stern, and every day makes life a more *serious* thing, more suggestive of grave thought. Then, the next moment there is, perhaps, a burst of lightheartedness, unworthy of one who thinks and feels; but here again Elena's lay in 'Philip Von Artevelde' gives the true account of that:

The human heart cannot sustain, &c.

And that very provision for happiness or lightness, in spite of such serious thought, seems to give us glimpses of the truth that Love sits at the helm of this dark world's course, after all. Else Talleyrand's hideous sneer might be almost believed: 'the happy are they who have hard hearts, and hard' —how shall I euphonise it?—'peptic powers.'

XLVII.

I rather agree with the view of St. Paul having taken, personally, a low estimate of women. It seems to me inseparable from his temperament. I had a friend full of fire and ardour like St. Paul, though wanting his tenderness, who was blessed or unblessed with the same gift as St. Paul, and he spoke in the same way—not contemptuously, for he liked to be soothed and flattered by them—but as if they were born to be helpmeets for man, and that chiefly. That respectful chivalry of feeling which characterises some men can only exist where that is found which St. Paul lacked, and which was in many respects a gift; still no man can lack any one of the feelings of humanity, however much misery he may escape by it, without loss in some other respect. It is a matter of

great interest, and even awe, to me, to observe how the nobler feelings can exist in their intensity only where the whole nature, the lower too, is intense also; and how that which is in itself low and mean becomes sublimated into something that is celestial. Hence, in the highest natures I suppose goodness will be the result of tremendous struggle; just as the 'bore,' which is nothing in the Thames, becomes a convulsion on the Ganges, where the waters of a thousand miles roll like a sea to meet the incoming tide of the ocean.

I never, however, could reconcile that coldness of nature in St. Paul, with the singular fire and passion of his character, nor with his remarkable and exuberant tenderness. Men are divided into three classes—the irascible or passionate temperament, the sensual, and the melancholy. St. Paul belonged to the first, which is no doubt the finest, and, on the whole, the happiest.

Poor ——! The secret, however, of his scepticism seems to have been crime; or was the crime the result of scepticism? for when the soul is tossed over *that* sea, without a chart, and without a polar star, it is almost at the mercy of any fitful gust of passion. I cannot blame severely what others so condemn—the bitterness of that sarcasm in the ——. People often mistake a contortion of anguish for a diabolical grin. Often the cry of despair is taken for a shout of savage triumph; many a brave man, and tender withal, has struck a woman ruthlessly her death-blow. Yes, but then the man was drowning. No one can understand the horrid laugh of hopelessness which delights to scatter its scorn on the falsehoods which are deluding others, after they are proved falsehoods, but he who has felt the ice of doubt cracking beneath his feet, and seen himself alone on a single ice-block, severed from mankind. I do not excuse, but I can understand both the want of reverence and the immoral life which result from such despair.

XLVIII.

October.

My dear ——,—I know little of the Countess Hahn Hahn or Frederica Bremer, but I can easily understand that the female character is very different in those places from here. Tennyson, I remember, in his 'Princess,' which I have not in my possession to refer to, but shall get to-day, draws the distinction well between the characters of the north and south:—

Oh, swallow, swallow, swallow flying south.

'Dark, tender, true,' I think, are the epithets he applies to the north:—

And dark and true and tender is the north.

The south, of course, passionate, impulsive, brief-lived in feeling. I believe the former makes the nobler character. At least, it has been given to the north again and again to regenerate the worn-out south by the infusion of nobler blood and more vigorous intellect. In the estimate formed of women, I should think there cannot be a doubt which is the truer and deeper—that which makes her a plaything, or that which surrounds her with the sacredness of a silent worship. A temperament like that of St. Paul's is happier, and for the world more useful . . . .

Still I think that tone of mind, which could only be found in the north, only confers the power of suffering—dignified suffering if you will, but only suffering. In one or two cases here and there you meet with those 'whose hearts the holy forms of young imagination have kept pure.' But commonly, I believe, the very purity of these aspirations becomes a dangerous gift. They lie very close to what is wrong, they transform themselves very easily into tempters—Lucifers cast down from heaven. Tenderness transmutes itself into something allied, yet different; disappointment becomes heart ruin. Do you remember in the 'Arabian Nights' the story of the princess gifted with supernatural power—using it always

nobly—blowing flame of fire at the genie, and reduced to a heap of ashes in the conflict by her own fire the very moment after victory? It is all very mysterious. The sons of dust crawl plodding on in safety to their journey's end; and they who aspire to guide the fire coursers of the sun, or float through heaven on wings of waxen purity, are precipitated into ruin, or else left in cold dank seas of disappointment.

XLIX.

October 30.

Walking down Regency Square, about four o'clock, I was struck by the singular beauty of the sky. Two mighty continents of cloud stretched from above me in parallel lines toward the horizon above the sea, where they seemed to meet. A river of purest blue, broad above my head, narrow by perspective in the distance, ran between them, seeming to lave their shores. Each of them had a rim or edge of bright gold, as if the river were rippling and glistening on the banks; and innumerable islets of gold were dotted along both shores; the parallelism of them, producing that effect of perspective which you see in an avenue of trees, gave a strong perception of the boundlessness of distance, into which they stretched away. Looking at sky and clouds, you scarcely estimate distance. The vault seems very measurable, and it does not occur to you that clouds which appear only a few yards in length are really acres and acres of vapour. This combination of forms, however, forced me to realise the immensity of space, and a deeper sense of grandeur and loveliness came to me than I have felt for many weeks. It has always been so. When I have not *perfect* union with humanity, I find in trees and clouds, and forms and colours of things inanimate, more that is congenial, more that I can in-form with my own being, more that speaks to me—than in my own species. There is something in the mere posture of looking up which gives a sense of grandeur; and that, I suppose, is the reason why all

nations have localised heaven there, and peopled the sky with Deity.

* * * * * *

I have received a letter from —— to-day. It is full of hope and touching in all its misery! Her sorrows have been great, and her trials are severe. She has attempted to find peace in the patristic system, which she recommends to me, but it is quite plain that she has tried it in vain. I replied that I knew the system pretty well, having studied it once with anxiety; that I doubted not it had in it a remedy for those who could believe it; that I was not prepared to say that to them it was not a real remedy, for the form of error often conceals a truth, and to many minds presents the truth only, the wrapping being instinctively rejected, as the grape-skin or sugar-cane fibre is rejected by the palate when the sweetness of which they are but the vehicle has been extracted; that even of the worst of Romish errors the same might be said, as, for instance, Mariolatry contains the sublime truth of the adorableness and heavenliness of female purity. But that no act of volition could extract this nutriment from error when the conscience recognised it as error; and to adopt a system because others who believed it earnestly have had their spiritual nature nurtured by it; to believe it for the sake of the advantage of it, must fail; that it would be destruction to the moral being; that I would rather live solitary on the most desolate crag—shivering, with all the warm wraps of falsehood stripped off, gazing after unfound truth—where bird doth not find bush, nor insect wing flit over the herbless granite, than sit comfortably on more inhabited spots, where others are warm in a faith which is true to them, but which is false to me. I said this to her more concisely in a few lines.

* * * * * *

I went out this afternoon to get some fresh air, and cool a little feverishness. After a walk I bent my steps to the spot

most congenial to my feelings at that time, the churchyard at Hove. It was quite dark, but the moon soon rose and shed a quiet light upon the long church and the white tombstones. I went in, and was pleased to hear not a single human sound far or near. The moon was rising, like glowing copper, through the smoke at Brighton. Above there were a few dense clouds, edged with light, sailing across a marvellous blue, which softened towards the zenith into a paler and more pearly cobalt, with clear innocent stars here and there looking down so chaste and pure. I heard nothing but the sea; that, however, very distinctly, chanting no 'sea psalm,' but falling with a most dissonant heavy endless clang upon the shore. It found for me the expression I could not put in words.

I went to the tomb, and stood beside it quietly for some time. I felt no bitterness—infinite pity and tenderness—that was predominant. I did not kneel to pray; I do not know why. I passed E. M——'s tomb, and paused one moment. The bridegroom lies beneath the hillock where so many fell at Chillianwallah; the bride is desolate. Two who were there are dead, both young. That marriage and that death are singularly joined in my mind, for poor E—— was planning her own wedding then, and settling that I should marry her. Young R——, too, has gone, but I do not envy any of them, except the soldier, perhaps. I wish I had been with my own gallant, wondrous regiment in that campaign.

L.

November 5.

Keble on this occasion is scarcely equal to himself.* The connection is forced. The mountain boy, getting hardened by years, is very indistinctly linked with the thought of unforgivingness; nor do I see why a mountain boy is peculiarly called upon for the exercise of that grace. Besides the 'blest

* Twenty-second Sunday after Trinity.

restraint' is not one calculated at all to produce any real elevation of character. It is little more than an animal existence, and all those notions of peasant purity and pastoral innocence are miserably false and sentimental. They belong rather to the heathen times of Corydon and Amaryllis than the more true Christian conception of a new birth into goodness and progressive excellence by knowledge of evil and hatred of it. If the mountain boy had lived in that narrow 'blessed range' all his life, I suspect his perception of the beauty of the 'snow-clad peaks of rosy light' would have been very dim and dull indeed. It is education which draws out the beauty of these things. I fancy my little Charles would see more beauty in his regiment of leaden soldiers than in the sublimest view in Switzerland.

> Oh, lady, we receive but as we give,
> And in our life alone does nature live.

A child's glance on nature is void of rapture, unless, by some unfortunate precocity of constitution, feeling is very early developed; especially a boy's glance, to whom a beautiful hill is rather a fine place for a scamper, or a good cover for grouse, than a place for sensibility to expatiate in. The sense of the loveliness of nature comes with the first susceptibility of the spell of woman. I have little doubt that the 'thwarting cliffs' were never called by so poetical a name as 'thwarting' by the young gentleman of the hills, until he found his rudeness checked by the vigorous chastisement of Peggy's delicate fingers making his ears tingle. 'Altered day dreams;' why, the dreams of boyhood are nothing to the dreams of manhood. The mysteries of this unintelligible world, and the solemn beauty and wonder of existence, do not begin in their fulness until the heart has begun to lose itself in 'life's seducing wild.'

* * * * * *

I do not quite know what to say about Carlyle. Sure I am that his mind has had more influence on the thoughtful young

men of the day than any other I could name. His thought is more moulded into many of the leading Americans' thought, and his power has told more upon the tone of feeling amongst the most highly educated manufacturers than that of any, I suppose, in England; and I am not prepared to think that that is an attribute of mere talent. Formative influence is a prerogative of genius; but the truth is, that talent, at least, often becomes nearly as intuitive as genius. When the mind is stored with a vast variety of thoughts, which by digestion it has made its own, it is wonderful how rapid by habit those combinations become, which we generally attribute to genius only. Then again, as Carlyle says of Mirabeau, who was charged with using other men's materials, 'to make other men's thoughts really your own, and not simply reproduce them, is an evidence of genius. Why did they not make as much use of the raw material of their own thoughts as he did?'

LI.

I will quote a passage which has struck me: —

'The true heart of moral culture is to balance extravagant tendencies by quickening those which are languid. Growth is a safer means of producing harmony in character than repression.' How often have I felt and said this! You cannot descend to the regions of the lower nature, and wrestle with success there. You must go above and fight them, as Perseus fought the dragon that would have destroyed Andromeda, on wings in the air. The lower is subdued, not by repression, but by making it simply an instrument of the higher. No fasting, for instance, will make the soul pure; but a noble attachment will keep all baser feelings in check and ennoble them. By-the-by, that is a better remedy than Cato's; that was the very essence of St. Paul's system; that was the gospel according to him. Not repression, coercion, law—that only produces dreadful

conflict. 'Ye cannot do the things ye would.' 'Walk in the spirit'—the higher life of loftier motives—'and then ye will not fulfil the lusts of the flesh;' and that is true particularly as well as generally. No court-martial or provost-marshal's cord would stop thieving in a regiment, or make a coward brave; but an *esprit de corps* and honour have done it again and again.

I am quite sure that is the real answer to Tractarianism and Sabbatarianism. Those systems, 'as systems,' will not produce animals as noble even as the dog is, though I admit there are some of the noblest of the species hampered by them, and also that some who never can be made noble require to be kept by them from doing harm.

I sometimes believe that the expression of communion is much more rich and varied where the presence is only that of mind, than when friends are together, and hour after hour passes, each taking for granted that all which he desires to say is understood. The presence which is bodily, soothes and contents, but perhaps for that very reason checks the utterance of thought and feeling, which only become articulate from a sense of want. Is not that the history of the origin of speech itself? Is it not want which brings out the child's first tones, and elaborates language as the requirements of men, by civilisation, become more multiplied and complex? And if we had perfect fulness of all things, the entire beatitude of being without a want, possessing all blessedness within, should we not lapse into the eternal Silence of God himself?

All the utterances of man—his music, and his poetry, the heirloom which the gifted have bequeathed to their species—are but the results of a want, of a loneliness which coarser and blunter spirits had been fortunate, or unfortunate, enough not to feel, and which compelled *them* to articulate expressions, like the thirsting baby, in moans, or cries of happiness, as the case might be.

LII.

November 10.

I quite agree with what you say about sympathy produced by fault, but I think you will not find my view inconsistent. I only say that mercy which is shown by us sinners to sinners is either deficient or extravagant. Fair, generous, firm mercy is only shown by One who has been tempted and not erred. I gave three examples—Paul the apostle and David, of severity; the former having not been tempted, and the latter having fallen—one of weak leniency, Saul the king, who sympathised too much with Agag.

Miss —— is a kind, true friend, but I do not quite accept what she says about V——'s life being too clumsy and real. No; remember, He had nowhere to lay his head; that was clumsy and real enough. Paul, whom I consider the sublimest of the human race, toiled at tent-making. Elizabeth Fry went into dirty dungeons, and in Ireland would have, with indomitable perseverance, done something in mud hovels. I only wish there were more real coarseness forced into V——'s life. The outward and visible do not always weigh down the inward; but often inward life wants more pressure on it from without to make it salient. The noble frigate looks heavy enough in calm, but springs to the gale, like a sea-bird, gracefully. Rely upon it, the real poetry of life is found where He found it—in multiplying loaves and fishes, in descending to things so mean as wine required for a feast, in collecting a few rude simple people round Him, in working the earlier part of His existence humbly at the carpenter's trade, in a very homely existence, and V—— ought not to talk of submission, or of a nunnery. Did you ever read Blanco White's description of a nun's life and mind—its stagnation, its anile childishness, its over-conscious purity, which is really impurity; its miserable, crushed natural tendencies, and the dreadful revenge nature takes in asserting her rights? Trust me, she

who would be wiser than her Maker is only seeming wise. She who nourishes one part of her being by the extinction of another is but a stunted monstrosity after all. Let V—— be sure that God has given a woman no nobler destiny than that of an abundant home, not the less noble for its trials. Her tone is not a worthy one; it is effeminate, not *feminine*.

I wish to speak firmly. V—— would despise me if I did not. He was not a true friend, but a sentimentalist for the moment, who was for taking all the coarseness and *terre-à-terre* life out of the way, that his Divine Friend might lead a languid, poetical life of comfort. I would not be a Satan to her. No. Is a *terre-à-terre* life after all as sharp as the cross? Are howling winds and cold rooms as unpoetical as Pilate's judgment-hall and the rude mock of the ruffian soldiery?

In speaking of 'Knox's Rambles,' and the effects of association with men in sharpening the intellect, you remark that this seems inconsistent with the fact that great spirits have been nursed in solitude. Yes, but not the ploughman's solitude. Moses was forty years in Midian, but he had the education of Egypt before, and habits of thought and observation began, as shown in his spirit of enquiry, with regard to the burning forest. Usually, I suppose, the spark has been struck by some superior mind, either in conversation or through reading. Ferguson was, perhaps, an exception. Then, again, stirring times set such master-minds to work even in this solitude, as in Cromwell's case. I remember, too, a line of Goethe's, in which he says:—

> Talent forms itself in solitude,
> Character in the storms of life.

But I believe both your positions are true. The soul collects its mightiest forces by being thrown in upon itself, and coerced solitude often matures the mental and moral character marvellously, as in Luther's confinement in the Wartburg. Or, to take a loftier example, Paul during his three years in Arabia; or, grander still, His solitude in the desert: the

Baptist's too. But, on the other hand, solitude unbroken, from earliest infancy, or with nothing to sharpen the mind, either by collision with other minds, or the expectation of some new sphere of action shortly, would, I suppose, rust the mental energies. Still there is the spirit to be disciplined, humbled, and strengthened, and it may gain in proportion as the mind is losing its sharpening education.

I have just read Keble's hymn for the twenty-third Sunday after Trinity. The last stanza but one is truly consolatory; and those lines about the dead leaves represent a feeling which is irresistible in autumn. I recollect how sometimes the heaps of soft leaves, the fluttering of the falling ones through the air, have brought almost a pang to my heart. Do you know sometimes they have made me think of my mother's grey hairs, with melancholy reminiscences of what she was. The unmurmuring way in which the vegetable creation resign their lives is very striking, as a thought, in connection with the great law of being, for by the sacrifice of life, voluntary or involuntary, and by that alone, can other and higher life exist. The mineral soil gives its force to the grass, and the grass its life to the cattle, and they sacrifice theirs for man; all that is involuntary, and of course there is in it nothing great or good. But voluntary acquiescence in and working with that manifested law or will of God is the very essence of human goodness. Is it not another name for Love?

LIII.

The difference between Moses and Anaxagoras, the Epistles and the 'Excursion,' I believe is in degree. The Light or the Word which dwells in all men, dwells in loftier degree in some than in others, and also is of a nobler kind of inspiration. Bezaleel and Aholiab—artificers—were men inspired, we are told. Why they more than other seers of the Beautiful? But who would compare their enlightenment with that which

ennobles the life instead of purifying the taste? And, again, who would compare a philosopher, physical or metaphysical, revealing in the one case the laws of matter, and in the other the laws of mind, with the revealer of spiritual truth? Is the *dictum* of Anaxagoras, that all our sense of knowledge is delusive, to be compared with that which Moses reveals—Jehovah is one Lord and Holy? The 'Excursion' reveals some beautiful truths of our moral being, but by how much our spiritual life is higher than our sensitive and moral, so much are the Epistles above the 'Excursion'—higher in kind and higher also in degree of inspiration, for the Apostle's claim, in matters spiritual, unerring power of truth. Newton's revelation of the order of the heavens, grand as it was, is inferior to that which we technically call inspiration, by how much one single human soul transcends the whole material universe in value.

I think it comes to this: God is the Father of Lights, and—the King in his beauty, and—the Lord of Love. All our several degrees of knowledge attained in these departments are from Him. One department is higher than another; in each department, too, the degree of knowledge may vary from a glimmering glimpse to infallibility: so that all is properly inspiration, but immensely differing in value and in degree. If it be replied that this degrades inspiration by classing it with things so common, the answer is plain: a sponge and a man, are both animals, but the degrees between them are almost incalculable.

I think this view of the matter is important, because in the other way some twenty or thirty men in the world's history have had a special communication, miraculous, and from God. In this, all have it, and by devout and earnest cultivation of the mind and heart may have it increased illimitably. This is really practical.

LIV.

My morning was broken up. I could not go out to Hurst until half an hour before two, just in time to see the children

off by the train. There was then an hour and a half to wait for the next train. I sat down upon a bench, and read a small work of Ullmann's, a professor at Heidelberg. It was a wild day, with driving clouds, drizzling rain, and lurid gleams of sunshine at intervals; but warm. It was rather fine to see the black and lead-coloured clouds drifting over the steep sides of the Downs, sometimes so dark and solemn in their march that I felt a kind of awe creeping over me. I am very fond of a *driving* sky, when it is not monotonous, and when the altitudes of the clouds vary a good deal—some sweeping quite low and only just topping the hills, others sailing more slowly far above, and with tracts of clouds between these. The variety of colour, the great diversity of speed, give a great charm to such an aerial effect: it impresses you more with the idea of supernatural *life* than when a surface of cloud is drawn at one uniform speed across the sky. Coming home, the heavens cleared brightly towards the setting sun, while all the rest was denser and more leaden by the contrast. Orange flakes and lines were shot across a clear sea-green sky, passing into blue, but made green where the yellow mingled with the blue, without any red to keep the two from blending. But it was the wildness of the whole, and the recklessness with which the whole air seemed animated, that gave the day its peculiar character, and power of exciting interest. I sat and read, and watched effect after effect, until the air and I seemed friends.

The miserable Mannings were executed this morning; they have been hawking the account of their last hours about Brighton, but I have not yet seen it. There is something disgusting in the thought of a large class of human beings getting their livelihood out of a death so horrible.

I have not maturely considered capital punishment. The questions are, does it deter from crime by example? Does it give a deeper dye to sin in public estimation? or does it harden by the spectacle, and enlist public sympathy on the side of the criminal, instead of on the side of the law? Or

rather, there is a previous question to be settled: is the object of punishment threefold only—to serve as an example to others, to ameliorate the offender, and in some cases to defend society by his entire removal? Or is there a fourth element, the expression of righteous vengeance? for I acknowledge I cannot look upon vengeance as merely remedial. The sense of indignation which arises in the human bosom spontaneously against some crimes must, in a degree, be a reflection of that which resides in the mind of Deity. If so, there is in Him that which the Scripture calls wrath, and we are not entitled, I think, to assume that all penalty is intended to effect, or can effect, the reformation of the offender. Probably some penalties are final, expressing infinite justice, and then the higher award of human law must resemble that. It is the indignation of society or mankind purified of all personal vindictiveness, expressed in a final punishment. For doubtless man—that is, society, as distinguished from individual man—speaks in a degree with the authority of God. 'He hath committed all judgment unto him, because he is the son of Man.' All hangs on that. Is final penalty the dignified expression of *vengeance*, putting aside the question of remedy, social safety, and does not the element of vengeance enter into all punishment? If not, why does the feeling exist, not as a sinful, but as an essential part of human nature; in *His* words, too, and acts?

I do not know any other ground on which I could defend capital punishment, for the scriptural authority, 'whoso sheddeth man's blood,' &c., is quite inconclusive, being a Jewish rule, and it would be hard to show that it belongs to the race, as well as to the nation. Nor do I think there is much weight in the horror which the idea excites of 'hurrying the sinner before his Judge,' and taking from him what you cannot restore. Perhaps there is something mawkish in this. The law of society may be just as truly the voice of God, declaring the termination of the criminal's existence, as a fever, or an earthquake, or, as a better parallel, his own suicide

would be; and if so, I would no more shrink from pronouncing sentence than I would from defending my own life by the destruction of another's.

On the other hand, the great difficulty is, that a murder committed suddenly, with half an hour's preparation, must be visited with the same penalty as a crime such as that of Rush or the Mannings.

And again, if the feeling of society be so strongly averse to shedding blood that, as now, there is a morbid interest for the criminal, and ladies sentimentalise, and send bouquets, and use compassionating opera-glasses, while philanthropists rouse public indignation against the law, then it is plain that, whether or not the public conscience has become diseased, it is better to award a milder punishment to criminals, and so continue the public indignation felt against them, than to make crime interesting, and its details the pungent element in such books as 'Jack Sheppard.'

Whatever becomes of the abstract question of the rightfulness of capital punishment, I feel persuaded that society in England is fast approaching to a state in which it will be perilous to the morals of the community to retain the practice much longer. Symptoms of disgust and sympathy are beginning to be manifested so generally, that it is only in atrocious cases, where a feeling of revenge for a horrible cruelty satisfies itself with the criminal's death, that deep murmurs of dissatisfaction can be suppressed.

Those are my crude thoughts on the subject.

You ask what is the meaning of Keble's line—

Who for the spangles wears the funeral pall? *

He has just said, that earth would not be worth having, if it were all, even though affection's kiss brightens it often; and then compares those kisses to spangles on the pall. Who would be in a coffin for the pleasure of having a velvet pall

* Hymn, Twenty-third Sunday after Trinity.

with spangles over him? What matters it to the dead? It is not a very polite insinuation, however, to 'dear affection.' He means, who would live this dead life for the sake of a few moments of affectionate happiness, or rather a good many, for he says 'oft'? I reply, I would.

I agree with you about Shelley, as to his exquisite delicacy and his power of expressing the inexpressible. There certainly was no coarseness in his mind; still I do not know whether that very refinement be not sometimes more dangerous than what is coarse. So thought Shakspeare:—

> 'Tis too much known, that with devotion's visage
> And pious action we do sugar o'er
> The devil himself.

I do not, however, really include Shelley in this, because false, miserably false, as his creed and system were, I do believe that a soul truly refined, pure and filled with a large love, dwelt in him. There was, however, a fibre of madness in his composition. That 'Sunset' is very beautiful; but those lines are morbid, and belong to the region of spectral phantasms, not real life, not the life of sunny humanity, peopled by

> Creatures not too bright or good
> For human nature's daily food.

The charnel-house, and the tombs with 'dead selves,' 'vexed ghosts,' and a kind of madness, are all very well for a being who is half insane, as Shelley certainly was; but positively I will not walk with anyone in these tenebrous avenues of cypress and yew. I like sunny rooms, and sunny Truth. When I had more of spring and warmth I could afford to be prodigal of happiness; love the 'darksome lawn brushed by the owlet's wing;' and meditate for hours over decay. Now I want sunlight and sunshine. I desire to enter into those regions where cheerfulness, and truth, and health of mind and heart reside.

In the seventh verse of Keble, it ought to be 'were,' not 'where.'

LV.

November 16.

You ask if Christ's will was strong, simply because upheld by the Spirit without measure in Him? I should reply, because He was a perfect man. Perfect man is manhood with all its appetites, affections, moral sense, aspirations, intellect in complete equilibrium. Fallen man is not a watch with something wrong added (sin), but merely a watch without the regulator; the mainspring runs the chain out too fast. He alone had a mind in entire harmony with God's. He alone could say, 'I and my Father are one.' 'My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.' It was that entire harmony with the mind of God which made His will so strong. Self-will is weak sometimes, even in a Napoleon. The will that moves with God must be strong, and ever right. 'My judgment is just.' Why? 'Because I seek not my own will, but the will of Him that sent me.' . . . .

You ask me about sins of thought. I suppose some persons have sinned by the argument you mentioned, that having done as wrong as they could by an evil thought, there was no reason why they should debar themselves of the rest. But *if* this were an honest argument, it proceeded upon an entire misconception of the passages which would be alleged. The Saviour told men who were priding themselves upon being immaculate in act, that numbers of them would have done the sin if they had had an opportunity, or if they had dared. To have thought it and wished it, placed them on a level with those over whom they were triumphing. But it is one thing to say that a man who *would* do a crime if he could, having already done it in his heart, is just as guilty as if he had done it; and it is quite another thing to say that a person who has had an opportunity and checked himself—for instance, spared

his enemy's life when he was on the point of taking it—is as bad as if he had done it. The difference is very plain: the one would if he could—the other could and would not. The great controversy between Him and Judaism was respecting the value of acts. They held that to have not been 'extortioners, unjust,' &c., entitled them to thank God they were not as other men were. He announced that the act received its quality from the spirit in which it was done. Feeling decided the question. Out of the *heart* proceed evil thoughts. Many a one who was priding himself there, was just as bad as if he had sinned. What thanks to the rich Pharisee that he had never been an extortioner like the needy publican? In kind they were guilty of the very sins which they condemned. 'He that is without *that* sin, let him first cast a stone.' Is there not many a murderer who has never taken away life, but in his heart again and again killed with a deadly hatred? Now the test whether he is a murderer or not comes when his foe is in his power, when the danger of detection seems past, when there is nothing but his own will and conscience to guide his act. David had such a chance, and so had Saul. Neither slew the other, but Saul hurled his javelin with a right good-will, and David at the very last moment spared Saul and Nabal. Which was the murderer? Which had really slain the other in his heart? And do you fancy David might just as well have taken those two men's lives, having resolved on it? Why, there is the parable of the son who said to his father, 'I go not,' and afterwards went. The resolve of disobedience was made. Do we fancy that it was not in any way reversed or cancelled by the change of purpose? The comment of Christ is that he (that son) did the will of his father. There is no passage in which it is said that the sin of thought is equal to the sin of act. It is simply said the sin of act may be done in thought, so far as thought goes. Whether it is equivalent to an act, I think entirely depends, as I said before, upon the question whether, opportunity and

safety being given, it is carried into action. Where these are not actually given in this world, clearly only God knows whether it would have been carried into act. Of course I do not say that the sin of even resolve is trifling. I only say that there are many steps, and until the act of sin is done there will always remain one step more of turpitude: except in those cases to which He so often alludes, where nothing but circumstances, and not the heart, prevented the commission. But *that* would convict many a prude and many a sanctimonious thing who holds up his immaculate hands in pious astonishment at that which he would gladly do, if he dared. Nay, I do believe that a secret leaning towards the sin, and a secret feeling of provocation and jealousy towards those who have enjoyed what *they* dare not, lies at the bottom of half the censorious zeal for morality which we hear. I am nearly sure it is so with women in their virulence against their own sex; they feel malice, because they envy them. There is a marvellous touch of inspiration in 'Timon of Athens,' I think—a cutting down into the marrow of truth which is perfectly startling in its knowledge of human nature. I fear I can scarcely venture to quote it. I remember that, even as a boy, it set me thinking.

Dr. Channing's life is full of interest, but of a calm, thoughtful kind. He had no adventures; nor were his inward struggles, as detailed, at least, very striking. He had taken immense pains with himself, but the nobler element of his nature was so strongly predominant, that his life was steady continuous victory, unmarked by any of those partial victories of evil which give fearful interest to the lives of the greater part of those who have fought their way to uncommon excellence. The purest love for man, the most unconquerable trust in human nature, seem to have been the very basis of his being. He was a Unitarian, but that is a very wide term, including a vast variety of persons thinking very differently on essentials. I can only say that I should be very glad if half of those who

recognise the hereditary claims of the Son of God to worship, bowed down before his moral dignity with an adoration half as profound, or a love half as enthusiastic, as Dr. Channing's. I wish I, a Trinitarian, loved and adored Him, and the Divine goodness in Him, anything near the way in which that Unitarian felt. A religious lady found the book on my table a few days ago, and was horror-struck. I told her that if she and I ever got to heaven, we should find Dr. Channing revolving round the central Light in an orbit immeasurably nearer than ours, almost invisible to us, and lost in a blaze of light; which she has, no doubt, duly reported to the Brighton inquisition for heretics. But, by-the-by, I began on that very day to write out the conversation. Here it is—all incomplete.

A lady called to-day, and when she came into the drawing-room, she put her hand on 'Channing's Memoirs.' 'I am sorry to see you read this book, Mr. Robertson.' I replied, 'Dr. Channing was one of the highest of his species. For a minister to refuse to read such a book would be miserable. I am not so sensitively afraid of error as that. I throw myself on the Father of Lights, read all, and trust that He will answer a desire for light. An immoral book I refuse to read, but a book containing merely false doctrine, or what is supposed to be false, I dare not refuse to read; or else I could not, with any consistency, ask a Roman Catholic to read my book of Protestant heresy.' 'But Dr. Channing could not be a good man, because he did not believe in Christ.' 'Pardon me, he did—he loved Christ. I wish I adored him half as much as Dr. Channing did!' 'But he denied that he adored Him.' 'I cannot help that. If the lowliest reverence, and the most enthusiastic love, constitute adoration, Dr. Channing worshipped Christ. I care not what a man says. His homage was more adoring than that of nine out of ten who call Him God. Besides, do you remember the story of the two sons, one of whom said, "I go, sir," and went not; the other re-

fused to go, and went? What care I, if Dr. Channing adores, *saying* that he does not adore.' She replied, 'I believe he adored himself much more.' I returned, 'that some passages in his Diary expressed the deepest self-abasement.' 'Well, probably he had a high ideal; he was mortified at not attaining that before the world.' 'Do you recollect,' I answered, 'how the Pharisees got over a similar difficulty to yours? There was a holy man before them, and because they could not deny the beauty of his deeds, they found out that they were done from diabolical motives, for Beelzebub's cause. Take care; do you recollect what sin they committed by that, seeing good, and refusing to recognise it as good? It is a perilous thing to set out with the assumption that a doctrine is true, and that all who do not hold that doctrine are bad. Christ reverses that order of procedure. "Believe me for the works' sake." I would just as soon disbelieve in God as contemplate a character like Dr. Channing's, and hesitate to say whether that was a divine image or not; whether God had accepted him or not: whether those deeds and that life were the product of evil or the fruit of the heavenly Spirit.'

LVI.

November 18.

I am very unfit to write; much tired, dispirited, and lonely. Several reasons may have contributed to this. The day was dark with fog and gloom. I spoke very badly, indeed, though fluently, and this has added a depressing sensation of impotency to sadness. I know that it is partly physical; that I am not myself, nor master of my fancies, and, therefore, I will not let my pen pour out feelings of which I might be ashamed, and which certainly I should disown to-morrow. I am persuaded there are few things morally so bad as excitement of the nerves in any way; nothing—to borrow a military word, and use it in a military sense—nothing *demoralises* so much as excitement. It destroys the tone of the heart, leaves

an exhaustion which craves stimulus, and utterly unfits for duty. High-wrought feeling must end in wickedness; a life of excitement as inseparable from a life of vice. The opera, the stage, the ball-room, French literature, and irregular life, what *must* they terminate in? And I should almost add, the pulpit, where the nervous system is more than ordinarily susceptible. I can only defend it on that which I believe to be the great law of our being, sacrifice—sacrifice for others. You can have little idea of the gloomy thoughts with which I have to struggle on many Sunday evenings.

It is Keble's beautiful hymn to-night, on the loneliness of the soul.* I have read it, and tried to think of what ideas would be suggested in association with the separate verses. Is it quite true that no human eye could be permitted safely to read all, and scan the inmost workings of the heart? Would the recoil be in every case, as he images it, like a mother's arm from a serpent coiled round her loved infant? I suppose it is impossible to read with tenderness and mercy. Personal feelings come in; inability to take in all circumstances before and after: we judge severely that which is uncongenial with our tendencies; nay, even that also which is congenial; for I fancy we dislike our own feelings in another —they seem caricatures. And yet I do not quite agree. I think there are some minds and hearts which might be safely trusted to read all without losing their respect and affection for us. Doubtless these must be of the very highest order. I could only name one or two. I remember an anecdote of Thomas Scott having said to his curate, who was rather agitated on having to preach before him, 'Well, sir, why should you be afraid before me, when you are not afraid before God?' But how very easy it was to answer. He had only to say, God is not jealous, nor envious, nor censorious; besides, God can make allowances. . . . .

* Twenty-fourth Sunday after Trinity.

I will do all I can to answer fully your deeply-important questions. I can answer them, for I had to find the answer for myself through much mental trial: whether it will satisfy you I do not know. But the irrationality of the popular Brahminical system shocked me, for it is Brahminical. I believe in the Atonement now, in a nobler sense than I did before, and also in His sufferings for the sins of men; but not chastisement, or hell, as they horribly call it—nor His Father's wrath.

First, respecting His 'sympathy,' which you seem to think represented as little in my sermon: and you speak of the trifling pain of fasting. Recollect, however, that the whole majesty of the temptation is destroyed if you understand it literally.

What was the temptation? To use Divine power to procure comfort; to choose abundance instead of stones; a life of ease instead of the hard rock on which the highest must repose ever in this world. How many houses would have been open to Him like that of Bethany, had He chosen! Instead of executing His mission, might He not have turned aside to live in abundance? You must remember His soul was preparing for its work; He was forecasting the trials of His life; His spirit was silently acquiescing in and recognising His destiny, and, one by one, dismissing the alternatives which suggested themselves—a life of ease instead of hardness; rashness and distrustful impetuosity instead of the slow, patient toil of years, and after that of centuries; homage to the 'splendid majesty of Wrong'; expediency, in some form or other; to make the kingdoms of the world His own, instead of uncompromising worship of the good—unless you keep all this in mind, of course it is ridiculous to talk of anything very divine in fasting. I only gave fasting as a convenient illustration of the way in which there might be pain in subduing the affections and appetites, and yet no sin; how He might really suffer being tempted, with no tendencies to evil. But, of course, I

recognised, and even expressly mentioned, the suffering of the tempted human soul as the far more important part of his trial. You say you cannot look upon those trials and tests as anything; but have you reflected that that temptation was but an image of temptations which in a thousand forms beset Him through life? Have you thought what it was for a real man to excogitate a course of action which was new in the world's history, and steadily keep to it, in spite of treachery and desertion, the apparent worthlessness of human nature, the ripe rottenness at the core of the nation whose blessing He was bent on accomplishing? Have you reflected how He might have purchased life by silence and a very little prudent time-serving; what it is to be alone, misunderstood, and in dreadful sense of forsakenness at last to feel that all was failure; to hope for human nature in its lowest degradation; to believe that man is kindred with Deity, even in Jerusalem; to see a spark in the worst outcast which might become a bright and blessed flame; to despair of none; to hope for human nature even with His last breath on the cross, and with the laughter of His devil-like foes rising to His dying ear?

Is there no sympathy here? Are those light tests? Think you He cannot sympathise with our worst sorrows, who shielded from scorn the broken-hearted who could only smite upon his breast; who stood like a God between their victim and the hell-hounds who were baying for their prey, till they cowered at His feet and slunk away; who could forgive a coward, and select the alien and heretic as a type of the neighbour who is to be loved; who was peculiarly sensitive to the charm of woman's society and its soothing gentleness; who wept for temporary grief; who was considerate for the tired disciples and the hungry multitude; whose chosen home was the house of the publican and sinner; who bore contempt with majestic dignity—is that a trifle? who felt keenly, as His own touching words witness, the pain of homelessness. Oh, can you say that He could not enter into our worst sorrows, or

that His trials were in 'show!' Comprehend that heart, containing all that was manliest and all that was most womanly. Think what you will, but do not mistake Him, or else you will lose the one great certainty to which, in the midst of the darkest doubt, I never ceased to cling—the entire symmetry and loveliness, and the unequalled nobleness of the humanity of the Son of Man. Ask me any questions you will on this, for if there have been a subject I have pondered over and believed in, it is the mind and heart of Jesus. Do not go to that absurd nonsense of mysterious suffering that cannot be comprehended—something neither of earth nor heaven, neither the affection of the man nor the God—a mystery, and so forth, of which the Bible says nothing. Mysterious enough they were, as the sufferings of the deepest hearts ever must be, but mysterious only in this sense. Alas! they are intelligible enough to any one who has ever conceived a sublime mission with a warm heart, and felt courage and tenderness fail in the idea of executing it; intelligible enough for any one who knows what it is to be wrung to the heart by the sorrows and faults of others. All that is unintelligible is the *degree* of agony. To understand that, we must first be like Him—as noble, and as loving, and as spotless.

As to the sacrifice—penalty and its atonement for sin—I will try to take it for my next Sunday subject.

LVII.

Mr. Crabb Robinson has lent me a 'Life of Swedenborg,' which seems to have impressed him greatly. I have been running it over while at dinner, but can make out nothing, except that Swedenborg was a man of great genius, under hallucinations of the intellect. He was very abstemious, singularly pure in life in every way; his chief beverage was coffee made very sweet, without milk; he abstained during

his latter years from animal food, and passed whole nights without sleep. He held a perpetual communion with departed spirits, but I observe they were all those whose lives had impressed his imagination, and, if not men of genius, seem to have been generally kings, dukes, princesses, and persons of such earthly greatness. In some of the quotations there are evidently flashes of very intuitive genius, poured on or into scriptural passages. The intuitions are true, but they have as little to do with the passages as they have with the Koran; and had he been a Mahometan, he might have spiritualised the Koran in the same way. His biographer, who is not an admirer, but a blind idolater of him, takes them, of course, as authentic expositions. Perceiving that in themselves they are marvellously true, he takes for granted that they are the very truths presented and intended by those texts. One grand truth he seems to have grasped—the fact of Divine Humanity as the only possible object of man's worship. He has besides identified Jesus Christ with this object. I have long felt the former of these positions, and I am more and more satisfied of the truth of the latter. Only a human God, and none other, must be adored by man. The important thing in the worship is, that it be a Divine, and not a sensual or even a rational humanity. I extract a passage, which also agrees with my creed, though I do not know that I ever borrowed mine except from my own reflection.

'Sex is a permanent fact in human nature. Men are men, and women, women, in the highest heaven as here on earth. The difference of sexes is therefore brighter and more exquisite in proportion as the person is high and the sphere is pure. The distinction not only reaches to the individual, but it is atomically minute besides. Every thought, affection, and sense of a male is male; and of a female, feminine. The smallest drop of intellect or will is inconvertible between the sexes. If man's, it can never become woman's, and *vice versâ*. The sexual distinction is founded upon two radical attributes of

God—his divine love and his divine wisdom, whereof the former is feminine and the latter masculine. The union of these in Him is the divine marriage, and the creation proceeds distinctly from them, and images or aspires to a marriage in every part. Therefore, there are marriages in heaven, and heaven itself is a marriage.'

He then oddly reconciles this with the text, 'In heaven they neither marry,' &c.

Then there are the most extraordinary accounts of expiration and inspiration of the breath; the latter connecting the thoughts with the earthy; the former, or the retention of the breath, which is the same thing, connecting with the spiritual world. Swedenborg declares that he lived for hours without inspiring, and a host of odd stories about divers, Indian yogies, people in a trance, and the whole phenomena of hybernation, are alleged in corroboration, but I shall not take up your time with those.

LVIII.

As I walked home in my dragoon cloak, I thought that I ought to be at this moment lying in it at rest at Moodkee, where the Third fought so gallantly, and where spots of brighter green than usual are the only record to mark where the flesh of heroes is melting into its kindred dust again; but in this, as in all other things, a man must reap as he has sown. I believe the spirit of exceeding self-devotion, as a mere romantic instinct, is but folly. Your reward is the satisfaction of finding that you have lost all and gained nothing as well as done nothing. Your thanks are reproach and blame, and you begin to find, when it is too late, that wisdom and prudence alone can redeem even self-sacrifice from the worthless class of mere blind instincts. One man's instinct is to save his life, another's to lose it; one's to get rid of self, another's to pamper it; one's to give away,

another's to save up. These are only instincts in themselves neither good nor evil, except as guided by thought and by being an instrument of *that*, ennobled. . . . .

I agree with and admire all you say about capital punishment. I doubt its efficacy much. I am not quite sure that the sole, or even chief end of punishment is the reformation of the offender. I think a great deal of *law*. Law rules Deity; and its awful majesty is above individual happiness. That is what Kant calls 'the categorical imperative,' that is a sense of duty which commands categorically or absolutely—not saying 'it is better,' but 'thou shalt.' Why? Because 'thou shalt,' that is all. It is not best to do right—thou must do right; and the conscience that feels that, and in that way, is the nearest to divine humanity. Not that law was made, like the Sabbath, for man; but man was made for it. He is beneath it, a grain of dust before it: it moves on, and if he will not move before it, it crushes him: that is all, and that is punishment. I fancy that grand notion of law is what we have lost; what we require to get, before we are in a position to discuss the question of punishment at all, or to understand what it is. Your criticism on my expression—'vengeance,' is just; but what I meant was a truth, though I expressed it badly: I have tried to re-state it in what I have now said of law.

To-day I read Keble.* It is singularly beautiful to-day. Do you observe the parallel which pervades it? The rainbow in the morning spoken of in stanza two, and that of the evening in stanza six, are taken as the types of life. The proverb is:

> A rainbow in the morning is the shepherd's warning,
> But a rainbow at night is the shepherd's delight.

The reason of this is, that a rainbow in the morning, being always opposite the sun, must be in the west: the rain is falling there therefore, and that is the rainy quarter; at night

* Twenty-fifth Sunday after Trinity.

it must be raining in the east, from which quarter not much rain is to be expected.

I fancy Keble's observation is quite correct in reference to character. The kindling eye, &c., betray the child of impulse and vivid emotion, which are so frequently found disconnected from principle, and most truly, I think, he describes such a man's life, 'dawnings gay, bright noons of sun and shower.'

I think the pastor was quite right to sigh over such a child. Philip Van Artevelde has the same idea.

—— Her dawn
Was bright with sunbeams, whence is drawn
A sure prognostic that the day
Will not unclouded pass away.

Bright sunrise—sunset dark, mixed with clouds, sorrow, and uncertainty.' The other character is the safest, the surest, and, in the end, the most blessed—when the calm, steady, humble enquiring heart feels the beam of everlasting Truth and mild Love burst upon it in the serenity of life's evening, the rainbow of hope throwing its tinted arch over the feebleness of declining years. There is a good deal of true insight into character and destiny. And yet, looking over the children of a family, how nine parents out of ten would reverse that prophecy, and anticipate success and happiness from the radiant one, suffering the other to fall unnoticed into the background. I believe that life always falsifies *this* estimate. The rainbow child is soon quenched in tears and darkness. The great men in nearly all departments of existence have been the dunces of the nursery and the school-room. 'The first shall be last, and the last first.' How the deeper inspiration reverses the prophecy of semblances! How precious in the sight of God those qualities are of which we think of almost meanly—plodding habits, meekness of heart, sense of dependence; and how almost of the nature of curses of what we call 'gifts' are—beauty, brilliancy, sensitiveness, feeling; things, by the way, which are almost always connected with

selfishness in some way or another, and, therefore, sown with the seeds of misery and failure. Quite right, Keble, teach us realities, and not semblances—to see things as God sees them, and in the spirit of true poetry, prophetic of results. That is a very graceful little poem, and deeply true.

LIX.

My Advent lectures begin next week. I begin to briefly reply to your letter.

Robespierre's theory of the abolition of the punishment of death connected with his subsequent atrocities never startled me. He never could have understood Portia's refusal to put even Shylock to death illegally. The eternal sanctions of Law were unintelligible to him. The transgression of Law was a trifle in comparison with human life, and, as you might have expected, human life was a trifle in comparison with a theory of his own. I should always anticipate that the rigorous expounder of law would be the one to be able to say most exquisitely in practice: 'The quality of mercy is not strained.' Did that rigour and mercy in Portia's character ever strike you as a union no less beautiful than true? And I should expect that a sentimental tenderness for life which is blind to the majesty of law, would be exactly the temperament that could be cruel when, not law, but itself, was interfered with. It spares to gratify its own feelings: it will not shrink from saying 200,000 aristocrats must die if its feeling demands the sacrifice. A severe view of Right, even if somewhat too severe, would have saved Robespierre from that. Of course, I do not mean that the objection to sanguinary punishment is necessarily sentimental, nor that it betrays obtuseness to the perception of the Absolute Imperative within the conscience. I only mean that very often it is so, and that tenderness to evil may be expected to precede a violent outburst of evil. As I said lately—'tempted, yet

without sin,' *therefore* we go boldly to find mercy. The tender mercies of the wicked are cruel. For all this, however, Robespierre's view may have been right, though wrong in him; a little more sense of law and of wrong might have made him a defender of capital punishment. Perhaps a great deal more might have brought him in a vast circle back to the same point of mercy again. Extremes meet; and I think Lamartine's statement a powerful one: 'Le moyen le plus efficace de déshonorer le meurtre est d'en montrer par la loi une sainte horreur.'

The administration of the communion to the murderer has always appeared to me, in every sense, a ghastly mockery. A minister of the gospel of forgiveness goes to the criminal with a message that, at least, appears singularly inconsistent. The chaplain, in Mrs. Manning's case, I think, outraged all decency; nor do I see how, in any case, it is justifiable, when the man, up to the very last fortnight, by pleading 'not guilty,' has remained impenitent. Better leave the whole in uncertainty for the next world; but the practice, I fancy, retains a lingering trace of the magical views of the sacrament. All this, however, is a digression, for I was alluding to the apparent inconsistency of putting a man to death after bringing to him words of mercy. Queen Elizabeth's 'God may have mercy on you, I never can,' and then a last deadly shake. Would it not have been almost superhuman to forgive, when a woman found that by diabolical malice she had been induced to irrecoverably slay the man who loved her to the last. Only fancy the rush of such an agony! 'it cannot be undone, and there lies the fiend who did it.' I fear I could scarcely have said, 'God may forgive you.' It is in the demand for such superhuman efforts as these that Christianity appears sublime. Looking into my own heart, I think I could forgive the deadliest wrong done to myself. I do not think I could forgive one who had diabolically done a wrong to one I loved, or wilfully made me commit a wrong towards that one which

was irreparable. As usual, I ask how would He have felt? the latter case was impossible to Him; as to the former, I only know that His language towards those who crushed the weak, and in cold blood slew the innocent, was not mild. THEY '*knew* what they did.' Did the last prayer include them? Whether the last confession of the dying countess might have touched pity, I do not know; but one could have hardly helped feeling, it is too late, this death-bed remorse.

'Le mystère de l'existence, c'est le rapport de nos erreurs avec nos peines.'

Do you not understand that? It is the kind of connection which is the mystery. Crime is less severely treated than error. A weakness of the heart produces more misery, more both to self and others, and is more severely chastised than a deliberate wickedness. It has often made me ponder. Look at weak Eli, only a little too indulgent. The result—a country's dishonour and defeat, two profligates, a death-bed of a widow and mother on which despair sits, and the death of a wretched old man, for whom it would have been a mercy if his neck had been broken before his heart. Then, again, Pilate, only irresolution—the result, the ruin of the Holiest. My only solution of the mystery is this. The hardening effects of sin, which save from pain, are worse judgments than the sharpest suffering. Anguish is, I am more and more sure, corrective; hardness has in it no Hope. Which would you choose if you were compelled to make a choice?—the torture of a dividing limb granulating again, and by the very torture giving indications of life, or the painlessness of mortification; the worst throb from the surgeon's knife, or ossification of the heart? In the spiritual world the pangs of the most exquisite sensitiveness cut to the quick by the sense of fault and aching almost hopelessly, but leaving conscience still alive, and aspiration still uncrushed, or the death of every remnant of what is good, the ossification of the soul, the painless extinction of the moral being, its very self? This is my reply to

myself. The whole mystery of pain has been unravelling itself to my heart gradually, and now that I have got a clue, the worse than Cretan labyrinth turns out to be harmonious and beautiful arrangement, so that the paths which are still unexplored, I can now believe a part of the same plan. Pain has long ceased to be an unintelligible mystery to me. Agony and anguish,—oh, in these, far more than in sunshine, I can read a meaning and believe in infinite Love! Goodness is better than happiness; and if pain be the minister of goodness, I can see that it is a proof of Love to debar happiness; nor am I moved from this conviction by exceptional cases, by perceiving that sometimes the result seems opposite, or by seeing that, as in the brute creation, it falls in apparent wantonness, without any result beyond suffering. I am so certain that all is right, that nothing of this kind, mental or physical, disturbs me. I know that the heart, like the wound, must bleed till the wound has cleansed itself by its own blood. Then, and not till then, the blood will dry. The question of the final removal of moral evil and its apparent inevitable necessity beyond even infinite power to remove, is a far heavier weight and darker shadow on my heart, but I have an answer to that too.

You say you do not think it was so difficult for Our Lord, if he knew it was only to last three years. First of all, time is not measured by years; the intense heart throws centuries into an hour. Succession of thoughts, instead of dull repetition of a monotone, might make three years of incalculable length. Then, besides, remember it is a Man, out of the resources of His human mind, pondering over, recognising, and resolving on a plan alone, which was new in the world's history, an untried battle with the worldly principle in its manifold manifestations. Only three years! Yes! but try to resolve on a plan—there are ten thousand possible to you—a plan for the country's good, which will involve, I do not say death, but great hardships in the teeth of all the conventions of society, and with the probability of having it said by your

own relation, as it was said of him, 'He is beside Himself.' Keep to it unflinchingly, until you can say in the very hour of failure, triumphantly, 'It is finished!' Only try that in a small way, and then say, three years are nothing.—No, nothing when they are done, for the years go fast; but recollect the minutes move slow.

A propos of the measurement of time, I remember two pretty lines of Moultrie:

> I had a boy, a third sweet boy; his age I cannot tell,
> For they reckon not by years or months where he is gone to dwell.

LX.

Much of the beauty that is laid to Shakspeare's charge is too far-fetched to have been intended by him. Mrs. Jameson errs in this respect, and so do the Germans. In an article in *Blackwood*, years ago, replete with humour, I recollect these words, 'And she,' as the poet pathetically expresses it, 'did so.' Such critics do with Shakspeare just as Swedenborg with the Bible—inform it with themselves and their own sentiments and philosophy, or, as the wolf did with Baron Munchausen's horse, began at his tail and ate into him until the baron drove the wolf home, harnessed in the skin of the horse. Certainly Shakspeare was a 'million-minded man,' if he was conscious of the innumerable philosophies and psychological truths which his million critics have found in every trifling word and sentence. I am heretic enough to think that Shakspeare was mind and dust, and that he can be very low and gross. Horace ventured to opine that now and then Homer nodded a little; he said it in a very gentlemanly way—for the friend of Mæcenas was a perfect gentleman—but I have no doubt he was reckoned a heretic for saying it. What I admire in Shakspeare, however, is that his loves are all human—no earthliness hiding itself from itself in senti-

mental transcendentalism—no loves of the angels, which are the least angelic things, I believe, that float in the clouds, though they do look down upon mortal feelings with contempt, just as the black volumes of smoke which issue from the long chimney of a manufactory might brood very sublimely over the town which they blacken, and fancy themselves far more ethereal than those vapours which steam up from the earth by day and night. Yet these are pure water, and those are destined to condense in black soot. So are the transcendentalisms of affection. Shakspeare is healthy, true to Humanity in this; and for that reason I pardon him even his earthly coarseness. You always know that you are on an earth which has to be refined, instead of floating in the empyrean with wings of wax. Therein he is immeasurably greater than Shelley. Shelleyism is very sublime, sublimer a good deal than God, for God's world is all wrong, and Shelley is all right—much purer than Christ, for Shelley can criticise Christ's heart and life—nevertheless, Shelleyism is only atmospheric profligacy, to coin a Montgomeryism. I believe this to be one of Shakspeare's most wondrous qualities—the humanity of his nature and heart. There is a spirit of sunny endeavour about him, and an acquiescence in things as they are—not incompatible with a cheerful resolve to make them better, which I trust will be good for your mind. Mine wants it much. I speak bitterly of transcendentalism, for it is the rock on which I split; and I do not believe either in its usefulness or its heavenliness.

> For man is not as God,
> But then most God-like, being most a man.

A sunny, cheerful view of life—resting on truth and fact, coexisting with practical aspiration ever to make things, men, and self, better than they are—that, I believe, is the true healthful poetry of existence. All other poetry of feeling, however delicate and beautiful, is only sickly; the mawkish feeling, which sees more beauty in unnatural Consumption than in the ruddy glow of exercise.

LXI.

I have got Schlegel, and mean to master all that he has said of Shakspeare. Spare moments of time I occupy in studying 'Romeo and Juliet.' Certainly it is the most exquisite embodiment of the master-feeling that was ever made. I shall have much to say about it soon. But one thing strikes me in a view of the whole—how very masterly the representation is of the unrelenting way in which consequences follow acts in this world. A clandestine marriage and a revengeful duel—the results are a double death. And that is not all. Circumstances mingle with all human acts; they are partly, as it would seem, necessitated, or, at least, excused by peculiarity of position. There is no act which has not its excuse and its apparent inevitableness. Ordinary writers tag a moral to their tale; as Miss Edgeworth does—which peeps out in every page: 'If he had acted so, then,' &c., but the moral of life is not forced upon you in this way; it is complicated, perplexing, and requires study to find out. Nay, you may find fifty morals instead of the moral of life's tragedy; and in this way Shakspeare paints. Partly circumstance, partly fault, partly what in itself is beautiful, lead to the catastrophe. Not one simple cause, but many causes, intertwined, made up the shot web of his tragedy, as of life. And yet as unrelentingly as in life, the sorrow comes to blight it all. Situated as they were, a Montague and a Capulet, could they be severely blamed for marrying? Situated as Romeo was, his friend killed for him, could he refuse Tybalt's challenge? And yet these double errors, the results themselves of the faults of others, not wholly blameless, yet not unmixedly culpable, slowly and surely bring on the end.

There are three great principles in life which weave its *warp* and *woof*, apparently incompatible with each other, yet they harmonise, and, in their blending, create this strange life

of ours. The first is, our fate is in our own hands, and our blessedness and misery is the exact result of our own acts. The second is, 'There is a divinity that shapes our ends, rough-hew them as we will.' The third is, 'The race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong;' but time and chance happen (eth) to them all. Accident, human will, the shaping will of Deity: these things make up life. Or rather, perhaps, we see a threefold causality from some defect in our spiritual eyesight. Could we see as He sees, all would be referable to one principle which would contain them all; as the simple, single law of gravitation embraces the complex phenomena of the universe; and as, on the other hand, by pressing the eyeballs so as to destroy their united impression, you may see all things double. Shakspeare paints man instead of writing moral tales. Of course, there is a moral in what he writes, as there must be in all that is true; but it is absurd to ask what was the lesson he meant to inculcate. He meant none, I fancy. He merely meant to say, '*There*, there are men and women. Under such circumstances, such beings would act so, and such would be the consequences.' How much more instructive than history, which is merely, except in mere annals, events grouped in the connection in which the historian sees them, not in which they occurred, unless he be a man as gifted as Shakspeare. Hence history is merely, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, Mr. Hume's or Mr. Gibbon's theory substantiated by a dry romance, until Mr. Somebody Else comes and writes the romance in his way, the facts being pliable, and equally available for both. Accordingly, Mitford's 'History of Greece' is aristocratical principles demonstrated from Grecian history, and Connop Thirlwall's is democratical principles proved from the same facts, and Alison's history 'is Mr. Wordy's account of the French revolution in twenty volumes, written to show that Providence was always on the side of the Tories,' as Coningsby's friend assured him. I do believe there was great wisdom in Marlborough's saying,

that the only English history he knew, or that was worth knowing, was that written by Shakspeare, for Shakspeare does not give facts as they occurred—no, but he gives ideal facts, since the facts cannot be got at.

You like to hear of my work and its success. Dr. K—— was expressing surprise at the thoughtfulness and freshness of last Sunday's sermon, which you have seen, and telling me of the slow and silent results of my teaching in revolutionising long habits of thought, life, &c. I remarked, that what surprised me most was, that I had been left so long unmolested, in spite of great grumbling, dissatisfaction, and almost personal hatred. He said, 'I can tell you the reason. You preach positively instead of negatively; you state truths which they cannot deny; they can only talk of tendencies, consequences, &c.; they can only say it is dangerous, they dare not say it is false; if you were once to preach defensively or controversially, it would be all over with you, and it would do your heart and mind harm besides; but every one sees that you have a message and a truth to establish; you set up your truth, and they are dismayed to find, if *that* be true, their view is knocked down, but you did not knock it down.' These were not his words, but the substance of what he said, and I think, on the whole, that it is not untrue. He told me that more than one clergyman had said to him, 'I think exactly what Mr. R—— said, but I should not dare to say it publicly.' A Scotch gentleman remarked to another person, 'Why, Irving was turned out of the Church of Scotland for saying one-tenth part of what Mr. R—— said on Sunday of the human nature of Christ. What a happy thing it is that the Church of England is too divided to unite in exterminating him.'* Meanwhile I go on, resolving to be at least true. I feel no certain tenure of anything or any one. I am prepared, at a moment's notice, to find the whole break up with a crash, as fine summer

* The Scotch gentleman made a mistake. Mr. Robertson's view of the human nature of Christ differs essentially from the view of Irving.

weather ends in a storm, the forces for which had been slowly collecting in the sunshine for weeks—nay, were the sunshine itself. I think I partly know what He felt in knowing that the crowds He addressed contained the Pharisees lying in wait, and yet went on. This is my feeling. I command crowds—I have not hearts.

LXII.

My dear ——,—My prediction was right; yesterday morning rose with all the frost gone, and to-day it is raining fast, and the sky is dense with clouds.

I have been writing lately on the subject of Keble's lines.* I have little doubt that the Church of Rome has paid far more attention than we have to that which forms the subject of this hymn—the treatment of penitence. She has more power to soothe, because she dwells chiefly on that which is the most glorious element in the nature of God—Love. Whereas Protestantism fixes attention more on that which is the strongest principle in the bosom of man—Faith. Accordingly, the Church of Rome treats the penitent by moving representations which touch the heart. Protestantism would do so by an appeal to the intellect, assuring you that if you will only believe, the whole pain has been suffered for you. When you state your misgivings, on perceiving that many of the penal consequences of faults follow transgression, in spite of faith, the reply is—'Yes, in this world; but in the next all the consequences are remitted.' Now this, appeal to the intellect leaves the intellect to its own surmises. Why remitted *there* if not *here*? on what principle, and how proved? If no faith will save a drunken man from *delirium tremens*, where is the proof that it will shield him from other consequences hereafter? You are then referred to the Atonement, and informed in evangelical metaphysics that infinite sin demanded an infinite

* Hymn for Sunday next before Advent.

sacrifice; that the infinite sacrifice having been paid, it will be unjust to punish you again. Once more the intellect replies—'But I *am* punished; and if eternal punishment would be unjust, temporal punishment is also; the whole penalty is not paid, and, in spite of all my admiration of the clever scheme, the heart will have its dire misgivings.' It appears to me that Protestantism throws upon the intellect the work of healing which can only be performed by the heart. It comes with its parchment 'signed, sealed, and delivered,' making over heaven to you by a legal bond, gives its receipt in full, makes a debtor and creditor account, clears up the whole by a most business-like arrangement:—

And when this Shylock-like affair with the scales and weights is concluded, it bids you be sure that the most rigorous justice and savage cruelty can want no more. Whereupon selfishness shrewdly casts up the account, and says, 'Audited!' 'I am safe.' Nay, it even has a gratitude to Him who has borne the pain instead; a very low kind of affection; the same, differing only in degree, which young Peel felt for Byron when he volunteered to accept half the blows which a young tyrant was administering. The love which is only gratitude for escape from pain is a very poor love. It does not open the heart wide, and, accordingly, basing his hopes only on a *quid pro quo*, a sinner's penitence is half selfish, and has rarely in it any of that glorious *abandon* which, whether wisely directed or not, has so marked the Roman penitence, and which we explain away by saying it is work done to win Heaven by merit. The Protestant penitent, *if* the system succeeds, repents in his arm-chair, and

does no noble deed such as boundless love could alone inspire; he reforms, and is very glad that broken-hearted remorse is distrust of God, becomes a prosaic Pharisee, and patronises missionary societies, and is all safe, which is the one great point in his religion.

The sentiment in Keble's last stanza is a true one—the 'scattered fragments love can glean'—and it seems to me the idea I have been labouring for the last two or three Sundays to bring out is the real cause of the difficulty—does the sacrifice of Christ save me from the consequences of my sin? That question has two meanings; it may imply, does it break the connection between my sin and its natural result—pain, &c.? For instance, will it allow the spendthrift to remain rich after he has squandered all away—will it give back time lost to the idle man? The reply to that is, No. Look to its operation here. Most assuredly it leaves all the natural results in their unalterable order of sequence.

But the question may mean—Does the sacrifice save me from that which is worse than all pain, the feeling of God's wrath, the sense of banishment from the presence of His beauty and His love? The reply to that is, It does. Realise the spirit of the Cross—the surrender of self-will in love—feel, that is, believe, that God is love; in all the sharpest suffering feel that, and do you then ask if hell can be your portion? Can love endure hell? pain? yes; agony? yes; He did—hell, never. That is, you are redeemed—redeemed by love from remorse, from the disposition to repeat wrong, from the sense of God's displeasure; and the pain you bear is not taken away, but is transmuted. The spirit in which you bear it makes all the difference; it changes it from penal fire into wise, loving, corrective discipline; nay, makes it even the means, by its very present sharpness, of saving from future transgression, and consequently from future pain; and even the pain itself has a tendency, by the slow and healing results of time, to wear out and to become, like the memory

of the lost, a sweet and blessed melancholy, passing into even deep joy. The whole question is, from what are we redeemed—from the penal consequences or moral consequences of guilt? I answer from the moral, and through them eventually from the penal; but only the appropriation of the Spirit of the Cross redeems. Love transmutes all. This seems to me the answer to your question of some days back, when you asked about being saved, and yet suffering. I reply, salvation is goodness, humbleness, love. He who has them, not will be, but is saved, and all pain only makes him nobler, and gives him a higher heaven. If he says, 'How unfair that I should suffer pain,' it either shows that he is not yet saved, for he is living, not in love and trust, but suspecting God, or else it is equivalent to saying, 'My soul can be made divine without suffering,' which is just about as wise as to say we can have serene summers and heat without lightning.

LXIII.

My dear ——,—I am very tired. I could scarcely instruct my class to-day, I have been so languid, that you must not be surprised if this letter exhibits in its replies the traces of a jaded mind that cannot grasp its subject.

First of all, the twice-told tale of Keble's Sunday before Advent, and its being 'use.' Things new and old out of the treasure-house. Is the sunrise use? Suppose a child casts up a sum wrong ten times and the hands get hot and the brain dizzy, what do you say? 'Calm yourself, my child; take a walk round the garden, then sit still, resolve, wipe it all out, and try again, and I will sit beside you until you do it.' I say to you, try again. As to the dream, let it be a spur and incentive to rouse and invigorate, not to terrify. You are not alone in this world; neither are you to begin again the scrupulously regular life which you have once found fail. Wait! Let all come by degrees. Prescribe no ascetic rules nor self-

invented ritual for yourself. That is law, and law only irritates.

Begin from belief and love, and do not coerce belief. Your mind is at sea. Be patient, you cannot drift on the wide, wide sea for ever; drifting on in one direction, you must come into a current of wind at last bearing towards some land. Be sure you are in His hand, not hated but loved. Do not speak bitterly of Him, nor mistake Him. Perhaps I was too severe on Shelley, but it was partly because I can make few allowances for deliberate enmity to God, though I may for not seeing Him; and partly because I fancied in many things he had done you injury. Let me say one word; do not begin with distasteful religious duties, long prayers, &c. Begin with the distinct moral duties. 'If any one will do His will he shall know of the doctrine.' Be simply a seeker of God and truth: and be sure you never can seek Him in vain. Then make yourself at rest about the end, death, and so on. You must not 'make haste,' to borrow a phrase from a prophet.

Now about the sermon. 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' certainly was the cry of a human soul in sharp anguish oppressed with doubts and misgivings. What else could it be? Was He not tried on all points, like as we are? What could it be that suffered but a human soul? Deity is impassible. God was not angry with Him; God could not be angry with self-sacrificing love. He could not, without denying His own nature, annex Hell—that is, an evil conscience and remorse—to perfect goodness. Christ endured the penalty of imputed sin, the sins of others. But imputed sin is not actual sin, though constantly we see it bear the penalty of such—that is, be punished as such. 'The chastisement of our iniquities was upon Him.' It was not merely the 'penalty of his own daring' that He bore. He bore the penalty of our transgressions. He crushed the head of the serpent, Evil, which would otherwise have crushed us, and the fang pierced Him. There is a parallel in the death of Socrates, so far as

martyrdom goes; but *His* death was sacrifice, not merely martyrdom; Socrates was simply true to his convictions, and suffered for them. *He* distinctly came that we might have life, and have it more abundantly. He alone, of all that are woman-born, conceived the idea of a contest with evil for the world's sake.

Many have conflicted with single forms of evil—that of their own country, that in their own profession—and in the conflict have been bruised; but He did battle with evil, not Jewish evil only, but the world's evil; evil in its manifold forms, grappling with it in its home; all evil. Socrates sanctified some kinds of the most horrible licentiousness; he was only a philosophical reformer. *He* came not to reform the Jewish church or Jewish state; He had no system or plan of that kind, nor did He fall a martyr to any such scheme. It was the overthrow of sin for which He came, with a glance reaching over the ages. The *Son of Man—man's* Redeemer. It was not a sacrifice for a view or a truth, but for the truth. This answers the question, whether there are not some sins not at all of the nature of those which crucified Christ. There are none such. Sin is the genus of which a few particular manifestations are but the species. The will which has shaken itself free from God's will, is the central principle of sin. It matters not whether this shows itself as hypocrisy, or cruelty, or falsehood, or licentiousness: it is part of the mighty principle of that kingdom whose prince had nothing in Christ. Perhaps in actual fact the first two of these had the chief hand in His destruction, but that was, so to speak, an accident and not essential. Had *He* come into contact with Herod, He would have perished as the Baptist did, though the Baptist was only a martyr.

And, again, 'they who crucified Him hated Him, because their deeds were evil.' What particular sins can you with certainty except from those evil deeds, and how could you be sure that any one such sin was not the cause of all the rest in

their character? No, I believe that all sins are of the same family. Impure love is only a form of hate and cruelty, and easily passes into them; and I could not say that those men were not cruel just because they were impure, nor that they were not oppressors, just because they were avaricious, and so on. By which logical connection I believe, even in this way, we could bring in every form of sin guilty of the death of Jesus Christ. He was on the one side, they on the other. He sought his Father's will, and all men who seek their own will are of the party of His crucifiers.

There was some cavilling at that sermon, much misrepresentation, much bitterness; but the chief objections I have heard, were in the way of suggested consequences—'if so,' 'then,'—with which I do not meddle. Let them draw the consequences, I state truths. The only tangible point they could fasten on, was the assertion that Christ bore imputed sin, but not the wrath of God, on which point I defy an attack. They have not a single syllable to support what they say. It is as pure an addition to the Bible as ever was made by Romanism.

* * * * * * * *

Forgive my descending to gossip like this,* but it is not merely gossip. To me these things are instructive; I see them in the light of history. I behold the incarnation of the spirit of the ancient Pharisee. I find that evil is not subject to the laws of space and time; that it belongs to no country, and is of no complexion nor climate. I realise the past when I contemplate a thing like this. I feel that I am living in the presence of the Ages, in eternity, and not time: among truths and principles, of which it is only manifestations that are subject to apparent sequence. These are the things that vitalise the Bible, and I suppose it is because I know the Bible and have lived in it, that I view them with such severity of

* He had been relating some stories about intolerant Sabbatarianism.

condemnation. Here again, however, there is need of caution: I may be a Pharisee for strongly blaming those faults, while I am tender to others more congenial to my nature. I may—

> Compound for sins I am inclined to,
> By damning those I have no mind to—

for Pharisaism is not confined to matters of Sabbath keeping and self-complacency in hereditary descent from Abraham, but belongs to every form of self-congratulation.

The translation of the Latin sentence is, 'his talent was so flexible in all directions, that one would have said, he was destined especially by nature for everything that he took in hand. There is a beautiful description of this versatility of power in 'Henry V.' Act I.; the lines—

> That, when he speaks
> The air, a chartered libertine is still,

always seemed to me perfect melody, and therefore well agreeing with the eloquence of which they are the description.

As to the character (judged from handwriting) it is of course guess-work—some things right, others wrong—written, too, in the style of an ancient oracle, or Hamlet's account to his friends of his interview with the ghost, or Romeo's first description to Benvolio of his attachment. That is, it would equally do for a great many persons, and is so carefully guarded, that if one side is wrong, the modified explanation must be right. 'The person is not so versatile as the Latin quotation represents, but is versatile to a certain extent.' That would be true of any one who could do three things with tolerable expertness—sing a song, ride a horse, or carve a turkey. It would also be true of the Duke of Wellington, and everybody except the Admirable Crichton, Michael Angelo, &c., on the one hand, and a man whose physical and intellectual fingers were all thumbs, on the other. Your butler can clean plate, drive a car, exercise horses, wait at

table, and be late for the railway train. Between the oracular and the guess-work, all these characters must, more or less, fit. Send him the same hand as a lady's, and you will get back feminine instead of masculine excellences. Thinking it is a man's, he has not introduced one quality that is feminine! These men are all humbugs. You might as well cross a gipsy's palm, as seek astrologers who 'peep and mutter,' consult the flight of birds, inspect the palpitating interiors of slain animals, judge from handwriting, or tie handkerchiefs before their eyes and say, *Je ne vois pas clair*.

'If God is Love, why do we need a mediator?' I think the best answer is, I do not know. Nor do I know why, God being Love, the intervention of maternal suffering is the indispensable condition of existence, or why suffering is the necessary medium for the procuring of anything that really deserves the name of blessing. Why are knowledge, civilisation, health, purchased only by severe labour for us by others, that is, through mediation? I only know that it is so—an unalterable law, the beauty of which I can dimly see, and always most brightly in those moments when I am least earthly in feeling, and most disposed to reckon nobleness immeasurably above physical or even mental comfort. And seeing that as the law of the universe, I am prepared to believe and acquiesce in it when found in the Atonement, as part of the divine government—a philosophically as well as theologically demanded necessity. It is no exception to the great system, but in perfect harmony with it.

LXIV.

You have heard people say, 'how impossible it is to acquiesce in the stunting and mutilation of the affections, and all the contradictions of a withering and chilling destiny.' Hard, of course, to submit to the denial of anything on

which we have set our hearts; but so might a child say who has to go to school when the day is bright and fine; and so might we say when tempted to sin, for sin is the doing of that which is, at the time at least, very delightful. But for the stunting and mutilation of the affections I fancy we always have to thank ourselves—our own imprudence, if not guilt. Besides, I do believe that there is a very profound reason for what seems to us the mutilation of the affections. Our affections are deciduous, and have a prospective end, like the scaffolding by which the house is built. They perish to give way to the building. Love excites the profoundest life of man; and each lower degree of Love prepares the way for one which is higher. The Love of God is the end of all, and I suppose that all must drop off, leaf by leaf, till that fruit is matured. The *withering*, no doubt, is often exquisitely painful; still we find that the heart cannot grow here of itself, and that it retains to the last its 'strong necessity of loving.' In the ordinary appointment this goes on gradually through the successive stages of filial tenderness, fraternal affection, intense love, wedded purity and confidence, friendship, patriotism. In other cases it is done by wrenches, as there are some flowers that blossom with a loud crack, when the old covering, once green and tender, falls off; and the great thing, then, seems to be to go on to the next stage humbly, if one has been missed, instead of sinking to the same level again. N——, for instance, has had one of the seasons blighted. In the midst of all temptations, how purely and calmly he has waited! Ten years of desolation, with a purity of light that has commanded respect and surprise in his corps; and now the rainbow begins to arch again—vividly it never will. But there is a deep calmness, which, mingled though it will be with a melancholy that I suppose will always last, has in it no bitterness. I do respect that way of bearing blight. It is very beautifully put, I remember, in Wordsworth's 'Founding of Bolton Priory':—

'What is good for a bootless bene?'
With these dark words begins my tale.
And their meaning is—whence can comfort spring
When prayer is of no avail?

'What is good for a bootless bene?'
The falconer to the lady said.
And she made answer, 'Endless sorrow!'
For she knew that her son was dead.

Then comes her endurance, and she founds the priory:

And the lady prayed in heaviness,
That looked not for relief;
But slowly did her succour come,
And a patience to her grief.

Oh! there is never sorrow of heart
That shall lack a timely end;
If but to God we turn, and ask
Of Him to be our friend.

Does your friend really think that the certainty of death in six months would not sound to her like a knell? Oh no; be sure few really wish for death. Bad as life is, it is in the power of a single dream to make us feel that it is not death we long for:—

'Tis life, whereof our nerves are scant;
More life and fuller, that we want;
No heart in which was healthful breath,
Has ever truly longed for death.

Several of —— letters speak with wonder of the failure of his attempt to attain peace and goodness by the devoted life of regularity which he led for many years.

Let me suggest one hint on this which may become a living thought in your mind. No one can 'attain to righteousness, if he seek it, as it were, by the works of the law.' It matters not whether it be a ritual or daily duties. Mere unloving, untrusting regularity fails in producing goodness. Goodness comes not from death, but life. How could suspicions of God, seared feelings, and, to quote from heathenism, 'the rancorous

melancholy of one who possesses a noble longing of heart for a better faith, but proudly suppressed it,' how could that soil nourish anything that would bear sweet fruit, or branch into noble deeds?

Yet I can see that this stage, too, is necessary. The bitter, degrading law, deteriorating the heart, goes before the Gospel. We cannot skip the seasons of our education. We cannot hasten the ripeness and sweetness by a single day, nor dispense with one night's nipping frost, nor one week's blighting east wind.

My Advent subject is not yet fixed. I have been diving into reminiscences of the classics, and have been quite startled by things which I passed over formerly without reflection. One thing that has made me reflect much, has been the effect produced by sculpture on the Greeks. Those sublime works, of which fragments are to us like inspiration, were, by the judgment of heathens themselves, productive of a corruption of feelings and morals that is scarcely credible. I thanked God that we have not the treasures of Italy or the Continent; painting, too. And it is very singular to find how all the nobler heathen condemned the stage and the dance, and the poetry which answers to our romance. Such men as Plutarch, Cato, Socrates, &c. One very impassioned passage in Plato, I remember, struck me when a boy—where he banishes all such things from his ideal republic; and all the softening strains of music, the Ionian and Lydian styles, retaining only the majestic and masculine Dorian, and one or two others.

By-the-by, I have just read 'Comus.' What a noble poem that is! Shakspeare, of course, was the greater genius, but Milton was a sublimer man. How seraphically pure and elevated the atmosphere which he breathed! You feel the dignity of goodness in reading ten lines of what came from his soul! . . . .

I took my Keble in sorrowful and deep depression, which I had not felt till that minute. I sat meditating on the red

embers in the fire, glowing with the history of years, as they so strangely do sometimes, till I lost myself in the wilderness of the past and future. Were I to prophesy, it would not be in Romeo's strain:

> My bosom's lord sits lightly on his throne.

I should say life is gathering all its fires for the last crisis—and there is nothing more. Nor do I think that exhaustion is the cause of this. . . . .

I find that suspicion has attached to the Training School, in consequence of my connection with it. The instant I heard this, I wrote to the Secretary to say that I understood such was the case; and that he was either a participator in the distrust, or else aware of it; that as I belonged to no party, I was quite ready for myself to share the distrust of all, the usual fate of those who stand alone, with not merely a negative but a positive line of thought and views; but that I would not for one moment involve the interests of a public institution in my fate. I, therefore, asked him to tell me straightforwardly and manfully, whether such a feeling was experienced to his knowledge, that I might put an end to all difficulties at once, by resignation of the office which the bishop had asked me to take, and which I had not sought myself.

Such is my position. It cannot long last. I only care to be true and open, without provoking unnecessary hostility.

A person of influence sent me a message, that if I would only avoid giving such strong opinions as those upon the Sabbath, I might count upon speedy preferment—to which I returned an answer, that the Lord Chancellor might give me the richest preferment in the land, but that he could not give me peace of conscience with it; that the world had nothing to give me which I cared for; that I held the true thing to be ever the safe thing in the long run; and that I could not turn one hair's-breadth out of my own path for Royalty itself. I wish I could say these things less sternly, for I was conscious

of saying on Sunday I threw myself on the indulgence of the congregation, being tired, in too haughty a tone. I know that this offends and shuts me out from sympathy in solitariness; yet I cannot alter. It is not in me either to make or to desire to make a party; and my feeble, unsustained efforts are like buffets upon the wind. They watch by hundreds for my halting, and the mass of beings over whom I wield a temporary influence for a brief half-hour, are only chained by fluency—held together as a column of sand is supported by the breath of desert wind. When that wind ceases it resolves into its atoms again.

LXV.

A long, stupid visit is just over. I do believe that there ought to be more interest in humanity and more power of throwing one's self into the mind of everyone, so that no visit should appear dull. An Infinite Being comes before us with a whole eternity wrapt up in his mind and soul, and we proceed to classify him, put a label upon him, as we should upon a jar, saying, 'This is rice, that is jelly, and this is pomatum,' and then we think we have saved ourselves the necessity of taking off the cover; whereas, in truth, the tory, radical, evangelical, gossip, flirt, or feather-brain are all new beings in the world: such a one never having existed before, each having a soul as distinct in its peculiarities from all other souls as his or her face is from all other faces. This seems to have been one great feature in the way in which Our Lord treated the people who came in contact with Him—He brought out the peculiarities of each, treated each one as a living man, and not as a specimen of a labelled class, like the stuffed giraffes, cassowaries, humming-birds, and alligators you see in museums. Consequently, at his touch each one gave out his peculiar spark of light, and each one of the characters we have in the Gospels is distinctly himself, and no

other: the representative, of course, of a class, but as distinctly marked off from all others of that class as the class itself is from all classes. What deep interest there would be in the most commonplace society if we could associate with human beings in this wondering, enquiring way, exactly as the chemist interrogates every new subject by innumerable tests until he has discovered its properties and affinities!

I dined with —— on Wednesday. Mr. A—— told me some interesting things about the unaffected simplicity of the Queen Dowager, and the deep religiousness of her character. Certainly, it is a wonderful thing to remember how she steered through one of the most tangled portions of our history, giving no offence, dismissing all pomp, refusing to hold a court, and, by the simple power of spotless goodness, commanding an enthusiasm which has been rarely given to the most splendid achievements. I do not know that I have ever heard anything so real as her funeral directions since the account of the death of Arnold.

LXVI.

I had a long conversation with Captain H—— about the Cape, where he has been recently quartered and engaged with the Kaffirs, whom he represents as nearer to animal existence than anything he ever saw. They seem as lithe as serpents, and as capable of concealing themselves from observation on almost bare ground as a hare. On one occasion they came suddenly on a party of them sitting round a fire at breakfast. A Fingoe gave the alarm, and in a moment the Kaffirs threw themselves on all-fours on the ground, and glided in all directions through the embers and bushes, so swiftly and tortuously that, though he put up his rifle and is a first-rate shot, he could not cover one of them, but was obliged to give it up and bring his rifle down. He knew those officers of whose interception and murder you may remember the account in the papers some time ago. They were out foraging on ground so

bare of grass, that though he rode over it an hour or two afterwards, he could see no place where a man could hide himself. On their return 400 or 500 Kaffirs, through the very midst of whom they must have ridden, suddenly started up and cut them off. They rode for their lives, and would have escaped, but that the horse of one, named Chetwynd, fell, upon which the others stopped, dismounted, and stood back to back, and being all armed with double-barrelled guns, sold their lives dearly. Seven Kaffirs were found dead, and others were carried off. Of themselves there were only five. They were soon overwhelmed with assagais; one was found pinned to the ground with an assagai through his cheek; another, who fought most desperately, was seized, and, as an honour, carried some yards off to a large stone, on which his head was cut off; the skull is now in the possession of a Kaffir chief in the form of a drinking-bowl. They paid, however, dearly for their success, for they were pursued, and 200 of them hemmed in in the bush. The soldiers gave no quarter, and every one was cut to pieces.

On another occasion, while H—— and some of his men were at breakfast, a soldier exclaimed, and looking up he saw a Kaffir within twenty yards of him, on a knoll of ground, in the act of hurling his assagai. He stooped under a rock, and the assagai glanced over the point of it, and remained buried in the ground so close to a sergeant that the quivering end struck him. Looking up again he saw the Kaffir stamping with rage at having missed. They rushed after him, as he was just at the end of a very narrow bush or belt of wood. H—— sent twelve men each side of it to run down as fast as they could, and when he judged that they had outrun the Kaffir, who must be impeded by the trees, ordered them to turn, enter the bush, meet, and drawing a line across it, beat every foot regularly back to the point at which the Kaffir disappeared, as you would draw a cover for a fox. As he stood leaning on his rifle, expecting to hear the cry of discovery, and shots, he

saw slowly rising, within three yards of him, the Kaffir's black head and glittering eyes. He remained transfixed and fascinated for several minutes, the Kaffir glaring at him, and he not daring to raise his rifle, knowing that he would be off in a moment. However, his rifle went off by accident, and H——, in a fury, struck at the Kaffir with the butt-end with all his might. The stock broke, and the Kaffir disappeared. Up came the men at the sound of the shot, and searched the place for an hour, in vain. He then went off, leaving three perdu behind at the spot where the savage had been seen. Scarcely had he got a quarter of a mile when three shots were heard—crack, crack! He ran back, and found that the Kaffir had put up his head again, exactly in the same place, and again got off like the ghost of Hamlet's papa, not one being able to tell what had become of him.

I am going to dine with him again on Thursday, and shall hear more of these anecdotes. I do not know how it is, but they rouse me more than anything of our civilised life. I do not mean this last story, for the poor wretch deserved to get off, and I should not like that kind of work. But the risk and excitement are more real than the being badgered by old maids of both sexes in a place like Brighton.

LXVII.

I have this moment returned from dining with Captain H—— and hearing a long account of Kaffirland and incidents of Cape warfare. On the whole they are very horrible, and make war more a matter of shambles than it appears in books. The Kaffirs torture all their prisoners. Our officers were tied up to the trees, and the young Kaffirs practised at them with the assagai, the mothers looking on and clapping their hands at a good shot. Some were flayed alive, others burnt with hot sticks; then there is a bullock-goad, a specimen of which he showed me, a favourite instrument of torture. Horrible

as all this is, H—— said that they are not so ferocious as our English soldiers. A Kaffir one day pointed to one of the men in a state of intoxication, and then significantly to himself, saying, 'You would make us like that.' They treat our women, too, with delicate respect, which our men never imitate. H—— has seen a soldier deliberately place his musket to a woman's breast, that he might kill both herself and the child at her back with the same shot; the English officer, a subaltern, took no notice of this barbarity, and H—— was obliged to put him under arrest. Indeed, it seems that officers and men become brutalised there. He mentioned one colonel, at whom a Kaffir fired, and singed his face. The colonel knocked the Kaffir down, strode over him, and coolly took out his knife and jagged it across his throat, instead of stabbing or shooting him. From his account, I confess, I felt strongly on the side of the Kaffirs. They feel that they will become as degraded as Hottentots by being subject to the English. At present they do not drink, and have a much finer sense of honour than the brutal soldier.

For a long time it was a mystery where the Kaffirs got their arms and ammunition. At last, when the war was ended, the secret came out. Every captured musket had the Tower of London stamp upon it—that is, the condemned muskets, which are bought up by merchants, had been shipped off to the Cape and sold to the savages. Nor did they ever want powder; steamers were fitted out by dealers at the Cape, and sent up the shore with ammunition. Can you conceive selfishness and treason of a darker turpitude than this? And the Kaffirs afterwards said, in Shylock's vein, 'These be your Christian merchants!'

He showed me a number of coloured drawings, vividly representing Kaffir life—one a very hideous but strangely fascinating one, in which an English officer, stripped to his shirt, is kneeling in the hands of the torturer, whose exultation and refinements in cruelty are diabolical to look on.

This is man! and these things are going on, while we sit by our fireside and complain of *ennui*, or weariness, or religious persecution or scandal, or some other trifling gnat-bite. There was a bundle of assagais, which H—— showed me, of various kinds. It is about six feet long, taper, about as thick as your finger at the thickest part where the iron blade joins it, and feathering off like a reed at the other end. This they use on all occasions to cut their food, shape their pipes, gash their prisoners, and as a javelin, capable of being thrown a hundred yards with wonderful precision.

They are a fine manly race of men, the women beautiful in figure, but all plain or ugly. I should except a few—an officer told me that one was the most beautiful woman he ever saw.

LXVIII.

Mists and darkness have shut out the sun to-day, but it has been close and warm. I have to-day arranged my time and occupations. From ten to eleven A.M., I mean to teach little Charlie geography; the hours before that I spend in my own studies, which for some time will be chiefly in works bearing upon Genesis, which I mean to study thoroughly, taking such books as Pritchard's 'Physical History of Man,' Wilkinson's 'Egyptians,' &c. At present I am working at Palfrey, an American, and two of the best Germans, who in all matters of research are immeasurably before the English: exhausting a subject. From eleven to one, similar occupation. Then I receive visitors or write letters. At fifteen minutes to three I hurry to the post. Three or four days in the week I have a class at the training-school in ecclesiastical history—Daniel and St. John. Then visits to sick—engagements—walk, &c. Dinner at six—listen to Charlie's prattle till eight, then study again till ten. Arrangements like these, however, are only capable of being kept in an approximating way, for

accounts, interruptions, &c., sadly break in upon the best-arranged plan; but only in hard work, with the neck ever close to the collar, can I find any oblivion of thoughts that would be otherwise distracting.

Now let me give you something of the Book of Genesis.

The earlier part consists of extracts from two distinct documents, distinguished by the use of 'God' (Elohim) and 'Lord' (Jehovah).

Now the question is, whence were the materials for this history procured? The answer is a very interesting one; but I believe I shall have to give it in the lecture which you will get. At present it is enough to say, that it is almost certain that it was not from Egypt, but Chaldea, from whence Abraham came. For the Egyptian and Phœnician cosmogonies do not at all resemble that of Moses; whereas that of the Etruscans, derived from Chaldea, and that of Berosus, a Babylonian priest, singularly resemble it in important points. We might have almost expected this, from the story of the confusion of tongues, the scene of which is Babylon. It appears, therefore, that at the time when the Israelites left Egypt, and long after, the very accounts which were given to them by Moses were the accounts taught and received by another portion of the human race, from whom they had been brought by Abraham and preserved for centuries. It seems that Moses committed to writing those parts which were chiefly calculated to be prefatory to his Law, and to corroborate by an appeal to antiquity the great doctrines he was commissioned to teach—the Unity of God and His moral government of the world, nations, and individuals—the religious parts of the tradition chiefly, and others which historically bore upon the foundation of the Israelitish commonwealth: as, for instance, those records which declared that the Canaan, which he required them to conquer, had been the property of their ancestors, that they had a hereditary right there, and that the present possessors were only usurpers.

This explanation of two documents will account for what must have often struck you—the repetitions which you find in many accounts, as of the Creation and Deluge, the going back every now and then to a point which had been passed, and tracing the same ground over again in different words, until the thread is taken up where it was broken off. You find two distinct accounts of the Creation: one in chap. i. to chap. ii. v. 4; the other from chap. ii. v. 4 to the end, beginning, 'These are the generations,' &c., which is the common and well-known way of commencing a history. In these two histories there are even discrepancies of a trifling nature. For instance, in the first, man is created male and female at once. In the first animals are created on separate days before man; in the second, chap. ii. v. 19, they are created after man, and brought to him to name. The great points, however, are in both the same—the Unity of God, the non-eternity of things as they are; and indeed the one supplements the other very materially.

LXIX.

I walked to-day alone, along the beach and then round by the well-known corner under the bridge, and so home by the Dyke Road. The day was very bright, but a brisk wind ruffled the sea, and swept the sea-gulls, as if against their will, with twice their usual rapidity, across the waves. Hundreds of these birds were regularly hunting up and down one single large field, without going off from it for at least an hour that I watched them. Not having a gun, I could not ascertain what was the cause of their attraction, and therefore I did not go up to them; but I suppose there must have been some sea-substance spread over it as manure. A large flock of Norwegian or hooded crows were mingled with them, and the distant hills were exceedingly distinct and clear, in that way which is often a prelude to rain; but I have observed that wind has sometimes the same effect. The shadows of the

clouds were very pretty, and the blue of both sky and sea fine; the air bracing and exhilarating.

LXX.

I did not forget my resolve, which I trust I shall not break through as a habit. I try to blend my will with His, to submit mine and merge it in His. Milton's lines—to Cyriack-Skinner—on his own blindness floated across my mind, in which he speaks of not abating one jot of hope, nor arguing against Heaven's will, but steering right onwards. I asked that I, and those dearest to me, might in all things unsophistically see the right, and do it.

I do not know that I have felt so softened and humbled for a long time as at the hour of prayer this morning; more gentleness seemed to distil upon my soul than I have felt for a long time. I could have wept, not happy nor sanguine, but subdued and humanised tears. I do not know exactly why; at least, it would take long to explain the train of thought. But it ran very little upon myself, or upon my own concerns. Wordsworth, in his account of the revulsion by which young disappointment passes into something resigned, and almost cheerful at last, speaks of a kind of sweet melancholy and repose found—

> 'In the soothing thoughts which spring
> Out of human suffering.'

LXXI.

I have just returned from spending the evening with the M——s. I took a long walk with —— to-day. She was brought up under Chalmers, but has a large and catholic mind, fresh, vigorous, overflowing with cheerful desires and efforts to do good, which she carries out on her own estate and everywhere—the secret of all happiness. I spent the evening alone with them, and felt refreshed; a long conversation about

confession, absolution, baptismal regeneration, and the modes of restoring peace and holiness after sin. She spoke of the excessive beauty of M——'s last volume of Sermons; I have not read them.

Your criticism about 'There must be a will before there can be a law' is quite just. Our minds, by their very constitution, must conceive of a law as prior, not in point of time but in point of order of conception, to the Eternal Will, in all moral questions. What I was alluding to, I suppose, was the laws of the physical universe, and I meant prior in point of time. Will decided that those and no others should be the laws which regulate matter. The Divine idea realised is the constitution of this universe, but that of course implies that the idea existed before the realisation of it. All you say, however, is perfectly true, and most accurately thought.

The reply to the feeling about the Temple of God in the universe, as contrasted with a London building, is a very long one. It would lead into all the questions about the place which belongs to the artificially symbolic in contradistinction to the naturally symbolic. I have no doubt that God has so constructed nature as to be an appropriate symbol of the Highest. I believe it has a sacramental power even. But then the harmony of mind with the All is a different thing, and less definite than the sense of harmony with living, imperfect human beings, struggling together towards God, sinful and weak, which is the idea of a church. The universe exalts; but I do not know that it distinctly elicits the consciousness of guilt—of dependence on human beings, or of our great need of sympathy with humanity. Perhaps it rather repels us from mankind than attracts; and I believe one end of united worship is to bring feelings of this class into distinct consciousness. Of course that does not reply to the objection about flaunting congregations, &c. Only observe, that is an objection against display and vanity, and their unfitness for public worship—not an objection against public worship itself.

'Better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox and hatred therewith.' But this does not imply that the stalled ox itself is bad, or even that the herbs are better, only that they are preferable to the other with a certain addition, which neutralises all its value. I do sincerely believe in the Temple of the Universe—its noble architecture, the music of its full choir of everlasting psalmody; and I am persuaded, especially to minds in certain states, nothing is more healing, or so healing. I hold it to be imperative on us to vindicate this great truth, that true worship may be given—ay, and most fitly suggested—there. Still I believe that lowlier but perhaps more really spiritual, because more fitted to fallen man, worship is to be found in a congregation of united adorers, which the other cannot supersede.

LXXII.

February 22.

I will tell you of a want I am beginning to experience very distinctly. I perceive more than ever the necessity of devotional reading. I mean the works of eminently holy persons, whose tone was not merely uprightness of character and high-mindedness, but communion—a strong sense of personal and ever-living communion—with God besides. I recollect how far more peaceful my mind used to be when I was in the regular habit of reading daily, with scrupulous adherence to a plan, works of this description. A strong shock threw me off the habit—partly the external circumstances of my life, partly the perception of a most important fact, that devotional feelings are very distinct from uprightness and purity of life—that they are often singularly allied to the animal nature, the result of a warm temperament—guides to hell under the form of angels of light, conducting the unconscious victim of feelings that appear divine and seraphic, into a state of heart and life at which the very world stands aghast. Cases of this kind came under my immediate cognisance, disgusted me,

made me suspect feelings which I had hitherto cherished as the holiest, and produced a reaction. Nevertheless, the only true use of such a discovery is this, that our basest feelings lie very near to our highest, and that they pass into one another by insensible transitions. It is not true to take the tone so fearfully sounded in Tennyson's 'Vision of Sin,' nor that of Mephistopheles when he sneeringly predicts to Faust the mode of termination for his 'sublime intuition,' after the soliloquy in the forest, when Gretchen's image has elevated his soul. The true lesson is to watch, suspect, and guard aspirations after good, not to drown them as spurious. Wordsworth says—

> True dignity abides with him alone
> Who, in the patient hour of silent thought,
> Can still suspect, and still revere himself.

I feel the need of works of this kind, and I shall begin them again. The Tractarian school have felt and tried to administer to this craving by the publication of Romish devotional books, but of the most corrupted and erotic character. Our affections must be nurtured in the Highest, or else our whole life flags and droops. At present you are reading 'Channing's Life,' and will persevere, however discouraging his saintly elevation may be; for high thoughts and aims and feelings are caught by contact with the loftiest minds, far more than by any didactic discourses. Pray do not give up 'Channing's Life,' nor read it by starts, but consecutively, and, if possible, regularly every day at a fixed hour. You must bear in mind, however, that his biographer's mind and tone of piety are immeasurably below his. The book is worth comparatively little, but the extracts are exceedingly valuable. I should not, however, say that devotionality was the characteristic of Channing's mind, so much as aspiration and adoration. Largeness of heart is more evident than warmth, and I have heard his writings characterised as cold; but it is a love

which is too pure and translucent for the bubbling and turbid effervescence of an affection with which much that is earthly mingles. However, I am not sure that intellectual brightness does not make it too clear for love, which requires a kind of dim haze to live in, where the horizon, and the finite, sharp outlines of things are not discovered, and where imagination by its own swell conceives the infinite of love far better than the eye can exhibit it.

LXXIII.

My Dear A——,—I am quite certain that all our expectations of peace in this world are delusive, except so far as we resolutely address ourselves to duty as it unceasingly presents itself in form after form. Otherwise, all soon gets disordered, and our hearts run rapidly down to discord. 'Take my yoke upon you . . . . you shall find rest for your souls.' At present manifold perplexities are crowding upon you, and you would fain get away into a place of solitude, to escape the harassing and distressing calls. But you remember that when He went into the desert apart to rest awhile, the people followed Him, and He had all the perplexity of calculating numbers and provisions, how to provide loaves and fishes for the crowd who were dependent on him? I do not read that he threw off the responsibility, or called it and considered it beneath and unworthy of His divine energy. How very meekly and patiently He listened to the rule-of-three sum of five loaves and a few fishes—provision enough for one lad, but—for so many! And then the arrangement and marshalling of them all—ranks of fifties, and hundreds, and thousands—Divine expedients to meet temporary deficiencies and past improvidence. Surely something of that spirit is available in somewhat similar emergencies, if the miraculous part of it cannot be repeated. Who can tell how your destiny may be bewildered or brightened according as you meet this emergency truly to yourself and God, or shrink from it in a way

that is not courageous? He was tempted to escape duty and long toil by some sudden act of rashness, and to choose plenty and enjoyment instead of a rock-pillow and fidelity to commonplace, unromantic needs and occupations; but he felt the reality of a higher life within, nurtured not by solaces but God's presence, and he chose to wait rather than faithlessly distrust.

LXXIV.

This afternoon I received a packet which touched me a good deal: it was a —— book, sent from —— by a gentleman, who once came to me in great anguish after a sermon in Trinity Chapel, which had struck home and revealed to him the inevitable results of the line of conduct he was pursuing. I did not know he had left the country. It appears that the warning was in vain; all his earthly happiness is and must be wrecked for ever, and he has quitted England, I should conceive, never to return. The inscription on the title-page, in Latin, is as follows:—

In memory of a warning,
Given, how benignly,
Forgotten, how evilly,
Mourned, how vainly,
Ended by ruin, how entirely!
Given by Infelix.

And that is all I know of the concluding history of one of the saddest tales of an unregulated heart I ever heard or perhaps ever shall know. I shall write, but to what purpose?—words, idle words—the whole realm of Chatterdom is worth nothing —noise and smoke, nothing else. The babble of little birds round the unaltered flight of a hawk, which moves majestically on, do they stop the death or ruin which is before him? I trow not. 'Eloquence, rhetoric, impressive discourses, &c. &c. &c.—soft gliding swallows, and noisy impudent tomtits—is the true worth of the first orator in the world. I believe I could have become an orator, had I chosen to take the pains.

I see what rhetoric does, and what it seems to do, and I thoroughly despise it. I think it makes people worse instead of better; exposes the feelings to tension, like the pulling constantly of a spring back, until the spring loses its elasticity, becomes weak, or breaks; and yet, perhaps, I do it injustice: with an unworldly noble love to give it reality, what might it not do?

* * * * * * * *

I have translated a few more of Lessing's paragraphs for you. In order to understand them, I must explain to you, very briefly, Warburton's system, which he partly admits and partly refutes. Warburton published a book entitled 'The Divine Legation of Moses.' The argument of the whole, well sustained by immense learning but much erroneous reasoning, was this: Warburton saw no doctrine of future life in the Old Testament—this is only true, however, of parts, of which the Pentateuch is certainly one—he concluded from this that Moses must have had miraculous power to substantiate his claims as a Divine messenger. Mahomet, for example, may have passed for one, and yet be an impostor, because his promises were to be fulfilled hereafter, and could not be tested here. He appealed to superstitious hopes, &c., and had thus a hold upon the present life; but a lawgiver, who appealed to no future sanctions and only to present ones, must have been true in his predictions of those present ones—Divine interference, &c. &c.—because they could be tested every day. If he told the Israelites that they passed through the sea dry, and that their shoes had not worn out; if he threatened disobedience with wondrous penalties, the Jews could try his credentials on the spot; but as they recognised these credentials, Warburton held that miraculous power must have been there.

LXXV.

There is no excellence in me to kindle excellence—there is nothing, absolutely and literally nothing, true and good.

Something, perhaps, which a superior being might mournfully and gently look upon and recognise as the germs of a once-possible—perhaps still in the eternities possible—excellence; but after years remaining rudimentary still, more or less dry and withered. A common gardener would require a very powerful microscope indeed to detect the smallest symptom of remaining life, and that, perhaps, the Chief Gardener could only see in a certain capacity of intense hatred for certain forms of wrong, somewhat, however, of the acescent kind, hot and bitter. Hatred for wrong is a kind of life, but there is little of the sanguine love and hope for good left.

I am truly rejoiced to find that you are beginning to feel the beauty and power of such writers as Newman and Channing. I think you will by degrees acknowledge the genius of the latter. It is simple, as all genius is, and not so striking as the splendour of Macaulay's diction, but far deeper if it be true 'Que les grandes pensées viennent du cœur.'

I read a melancholy story to-day. A young English lady, who had been sent from Australia to finish her education in England, was returning to her parents, when the vessel was wrecked, and all the party with whom she was, except herself, was slain. She was taken prisoner by the natives, and has been forced to live with them ever since. She has been seen more than once, vigilantly attended by a black. She is hurried away instantly when the whites are seen. All efforts hitherto to penetrate the forest, and discover her, have been unavailing. The Australian savage is almost lower than the Bosjesman in the scale of humanity. Conceive such a lot for a refined and educated girl. Poor, poor thing! I should like to be in Australia. In my present mood, I would lead the forlorn hope in search of her; I would not recommend any black to come within reach of my rifle. How much better a virgin grave in the Atlantic would have been for her!

* * * * * * * *

I have finished Lessing for you, in order that you might

have it all complete on Sunday morning. The latter part is merely an old speculation about our pre-existence, as old as Pythagoras, dimly suspected by Plato, hinted at by Tennyson in the 'Two Voices,' and a fancy, I suppose, which has occupied some minutes of all our lives. You will take it as a fancy, nothing more. It can neither be proved nor disproved. Still, even in the apparent absurdities of some minds there is more that is instructive than in the wisdom of others. The whole piece is valuable, chiefly as suggestive; it is crude and imperfect; but it gives large glances into God's world and the Life of man as a whole, and after all does not err in putting in too much details, or in shading too much the grand sketch. * * * * *

'Extroitive' is a coinage of Coleridge.* 'Introit' is a musical word, meaning an entrance. Extroitive means that which goes from within abroad. Introitive, applied to a character, would mean one which is exactly the reverse. Thus extroitive, in his mode of application, describes a character which considers the outward consequences of moral evil chiefly, shrinking from them, and penetrates less to the heart and kernel of the matter—shuddering at the deformity of evil in and for itself. From this he draws the conclusion that women are less hypocrites to their own minds than men, because they do not often pretend to themselves to be guided by principle, nor use sophistry to make their acts square with right. It is quite sufficient for such a mind to say, 'It was necessary to do wrong; or else' ——. Consequently, women are less veracious than men; dereliction from truth being a slight thing to them in comparison of having to endure the consequences of speaking it. In other words, they feel a Necessity above Right—a fearful thing to feel. I believe this is a correct exposition of what Coleridge means. I am afraid, however, it explains Shakespeare where Coleridge him-

* See Coleridge, 'Lectures on Shakespeare, &c.' p. 114.

self puzzles over him in the conclusion of his 'Notes on All's Well that Ends Well,' respecting Helena's conduct.

LXXVI.

March 9.

Lord Langdale has pronounced, at last, the judgment of the Privy Council in Gorham *v.* Bishop of Exeter. The decision, in which the Council, with the exception of Knight Bruce, were unanimous, with the approval of the two Archbishops, and the disapproval of the Bishop of London, is to the effect that Mr. Gorham's views are not contrary to the doctrine of the Church of England. The arguments are very temperate and wise, and, I think, unanswerable. If you have the paper, pray look at the quotations from our great divines at the close of the judgment; they are decisive, I think, that Mr. Gorham's opinions are at least honestly tenable in the Church of England. I do not agree with Mr. Gorham any more than I do with the Bishop, and I think, on the whole, the Bishop's views are less likely to undermine Christianity than Mr. Gorham's; for the former at least acknowledges all Christians as God's children, whereas the latter only uses it in the judgment of charity, 'consider a man honest until he is proved a rogue,' which in common life does not make us feel particularly at ease, when we are going through a crowd with money or jewels on us. Nor does it, practically, much satisfy the good people that those around them are Christians, whatever they may say in the judgment of charity, which is especially restricted to the baptismal font. The common expression among them is, Is he a Christian? Now, with all my heart I love our service for pronouncing, as St. Paul does, 'that all who have been baptised into Christ have put on Christ,' that is, are Christians. Baptism is the grand special revelation to an individual by name, A, B, or C, of the great truth Christ revealed for the race, that all, Greeks and barbarians, are the children of God. It is the fact which they are to believe, a

fact before they believe it, else how could they be asked to believe it? Faith does not create the fact, it only receives it. Baptism is the visible declaration of this, saying, 'Now, remember you are a child of God, from henceforth live as such.' I accept gladly the expression of the Catechism, 'My baptism, wherein I was made a child of God,' &c.—*made*, as the Queen is made Queen at her coronation. She was Queen before; nay, if she had not been Queen, coronation could not make her Queen; it could not make Lady Jane Grey, Queen. Baptism could not make me a child of God, unless I were one by reason of my Humanity already. To live as such—to believe it and realise it—is to become regenerate. The Bishop says that baptism makes a child of God in the wrong sense that it creates him such, transforms him, which is magic. Still, without disputing how a child became a Christian, the Bishop would agree with me in this, that the child is thenceforth to be treated as a temple of the Holy Ghost, in which way St. Paul treated all Christians baptized, even though guilty of flagrant crimes. 'Whether you believe it or no, you are temples of God, as such holy; if any man pollute the temple of God, him shall God destroy.' Does not the sin consist in this—in denying that they were God's children, and living as if they were not such? Whereas Mr. Gorham, who holds that this magical efficacy takes place, but only in some cases, leaves the whole truth of Christianity maimed and disfigured, and brings us back to the spirit of the Jews and the Pharisees. 'I am a child of God in virtue of something not general, like baptism, but special and personal, as feelings, opinions,' &c. You are a publican, a Gentile, one of the world in short—and then what has become of Christianity?

I have been asked in many directions to publish my sermon on Baptism, which seemed to strike nearly everybody in a new light, being not a *viâ media*, or cautious attempt at steering between two extremes, but a larger truth which absorbs them both, and annihilates their respective errors. I have not

yet quite decided. Next Sunday I shall preach again on the same subject, with further elucidations.

LXXVII.

I have been interrupted by two long visits—one a pressing request from the Athenæum to lecture. I refused. The other, a visit from the sister of a Quaker, who has applied to me for baptism in consequence of the sermon of last Sunday, and a series of impressions produced in Trinity during some months past.

I find the two sermons on Baptism have made an impression, in some cases producing great dislike, but in others producing thought, and appearing to shed light on what had before been dark. So far, I have reason to be grateful. I am nearly determined, however, not to publish, at all events for some time. If I should, it will be in another form, with the whole recast and remoulded.

You must not ever permit yourself the use of that word 'Too late!' Alfieri, when did he begin to study? Shakespeare, when did he leave off deer-stalking and dissipation? He was thirty before he wrote his first poem. Thomas Scott began Hebrew at fifty-six. I do not see what is the use of striking experience if it cannot be applied, and if time can ever be 'too late.' Too late, of course, for any of us to undo the past, but not too late from the past to make the future and present wiser and better than they would have been without our often-bitter past experience.

A propos of prison-house vegetation, &c., Silvio Pellico composed his 'Memoirs' in prisons, the only materials offered for which were created by a fresh living habit of observation. Do you remember how he contrived to make for himself a life of thought out of the transient visits of the plain uninteresting daughter of his gaoler, by simply cultivating a healthy interest in all that is human and has life? Do you forget the story of Picciola? Do you know where the best book which

Spain has given to the world, 'Don Quixote,' was written? By a one-armed man, whose other arm was lopped off, in a dungeon. Oh! be assured that what they call the means of grace are like the means of travelling, very good for getting fast over the ground without exertion, with the assistance of others, but not so good for developing inward muscular energy. A languid lady behind her four greys may look contemptuously on the pedestrian who is struggling along the dusty highroad, and making small progress in comparison—that is, of her horses—but in comparison with her! —— gets on very fast with the assistance of —— in knowing all about God and the spiritual life; but in respect of thinking for himself, getting power to stand alone and lead a John-Baptist life in the wilderness, with no means of grace, sermons, gifted ministers to commune with, why I think —— had much better go to Juan Fernandez at once, and try to find out how much he has in him of his own; of what stuff he is made, and how, alone, he can front the everlasting Fact, and feel at home in it. A student of medicine, listening to a clinical lecture by the bedside of a patient, learns a great deal about muscles, nerves, and names; but I fancy a feeble attempt in great pain to stagger across the floor of the hospital, teaches more of the practice of health and use of the muscles than all the clinical lectures in the world. Crutches are capital for locomotion, but for strengthening the limb which they save from the ground, until its bulk becomes flaccid, not very capital, I guess! No; rely upon it, the spiritual life is not knowing, nor hearing, but doing. We only know so far as we can do; we learn to do, by doing, and we learn to know, by doing: what we do, truly, rightly, in the way of duty, that, and only that we are. Sermons are crutches—I believe often the worst things for spiritual health that ever were invented.

LXXVIII.

Thursday, March 21.

'Now, to reply to your remark on the view of baptism which I gave. You ask why the Church of England calls a child, previous to baptism, a child of wrath, if baptism merely recognises the fact of it being a child of God. Baptism does not merely recognise the fact; it reveals it, as a fact unknown, and previous to the knowledge of which the child or man cannot be called regenerate. One who is by right a child of God lives, in fact, a child of wrath, pursuing the path to certain misery by sin. Was not the younger son, in the parable, his father's child really and truly, whether he lived as such or not; but was he not also a child of wrath, and what good did his relationship do him until he recognised it and claimed its rights? In truth, and in fact, he may be said to have then really, in a figurative sense, for the first time, had power to become a son. Yet that power rested upon a fact which was quite independent of his moods and feelings. I would use, with all my heart, both expressions of our formularies:—a child of wrath before baptism made a child of God by baptism; and yet I would earnestly maintain that baptism could only make the child such, in virtue of its being by right, not by recognition, such before.

To all practical purposes the fact is valueless, until revealed, just as a child of a sovereign might be living as the son of a pirate, if he had been kidnapped, and did not know his parentage; but all the value of the revelation depends upon the circumstance that it is the revelation of a fact, and not the demand of a sentiment, nor the performance of a miracle, nor the fabrication of a new relation. For instance, the kidnapped pirate—what would be the power of a message declaring him a royal child? None, except the power of a fact. Adoption by a stranger would be nothing, nor could it make him heir to a throne. Still, you will observe that without that message the

fact would be profitless, and he never could have inherited the kingdom. Would you not say, rightly, that he was the son of piracy before, but that the message had made him heir of a kingdom; and this not as a *façon de parler*—you would be speaking of a reality. Baptism is such a reality; God's missive to an individual, bearing a name, personally, specially directed as a superscription—I baptize thee, A.B.C.

I believe this will remove all difficulty about the Thirteenth Article. What can be the value of an outlaw's deeds, voluntarily outlawed, refusing his father's laws, spurning his father's home, and living in the original sin—the fountain guilt of denying by every act his likeness and relationship to God, refusing by his life to be His child, and leading, therefore, not a life of truth and fact, but, as St. John says, the life of one who is a liar, and does not the truth, to whom Christ came as one of His own and he received him not?

Cornelius' alms, &c., were not looked upon as sins, you say. No; and the Article does not say that acts done with the inspiration of God's Spirit are sins, but those that are done without. Now, St. Peter expressly declares that Cornelius had the Spirit, and therefore he baptized him. He had, in fact, been living long under its influence, which Peter was astonished to find. What is the Spirit of Christ?—that whereby we cry Abba, Father; and surely we could not say the deeds are good which are done in an opposite spirit.

The more I study the Prayer Book the more I am convinced that no other view will explain its words, and the more do I feel their preciousness, of which the miserable dissenters would rob us. I would not give up one sentence which it contains upon the subject. I would far rather hold the Romanist than the dissenting Evangelical vulgarisms upon the subject. And indeed, practically, I fancy there would be little difference between my teaching on this point and that of a Tractarian, except in the dark view they necessarily take of the quenching of a baptismal spark by sin, to be rekindled

only by tears, &c. &c. &c. I should touch on the ground they do. You are a child of God, claim your privileges—you may lose them else for ever—'a child of God,' and baptism is your assurance of it, not your feelings, which are sanguine to-day and depressed to-morrow, but the one baptism. Only he would say, in baptism you were miraculously manufactured into God's child. I would say, by baptism was revealed to you a truth which by nature you could not have.

I do not agree with you about the Jesuitical character of our Church and its services. I believe the Articles are open Articles. I do not think it impossible for men holding very different views to be able to sign them, except a rabid dissenter; even a Calvinist might—of course not a Quaker.

Do study the services in this spirit, and see whether they do not proclaim most blessed truths, that all are God's children, *de jure* but not *de facto*—that there must be a separate body—a church differing from the evil world—though the world itself ought to be, and one day will be, 'the kingdom of Our Lord and of his Christ.'

You are quite right in saying that the argument against God waiting to send down His Spirit would hold with equal force against prayer. Of course, if prayer could dictate to God time and place, or if it left no alternative to God to grant or not, which the Romish doctrine presumes, or if God never answered prayer except in the way which it prescribes, or if He never gave, except in answer to prayer, as Rome says in reference to baptism, or if the fact were not that prayer is the voice of the Spirit of God himself within us, and the reply, therefore, an answer to himself. (Romans viii. 26, 27.) God does not wait on a man for his claim of the promise, to the last, because He gives the Spirit before he prays. Is not prayer spiritual life, whether it be in words or in aspirations?

LXXIX.

The weather for the last ten days has been bright and clear, but a piercing north-east wind has made all outdoor work wretched, and appears to pepper the mouth and throat with invisible cayenne and sands of the desert. To-day it has come down in hail and snow. Probably, when it does change, we shall have genial summer all at once with startling contrast.

I have been very hard at work lately, with almost no time for reading or writing. Next week service every day, and two sermons on Good Friday, will abridge my time sadly, besides constant occupation in preparing pupils at the training-school for Government examination in the ensuing week. To-day I scarcely know where to turn, so much must be done before night. To-morrow morning I mean to take Luke xi. 1, and preach on Unconscious Influence. The Disciples saw their Lord praying, and asked to be taught. So St. Peter went straight to the sepulchre, and St. John, who had hesitated before at the door, went in after, indirectly and unconsciously influenced by that act. All life is a history of the power of involuntary unconscious influences like these. Our conscious influence is the result of intention, and on the whole does little; but our unconscious influence is the aggregate result of our whole character, manifesting itself in words, looks, acts, that are not meant to effect anything, but which inevitably mould others. Our conscious and intentional influence may fail or may be false, but our involuntary is inevitable, and every moment operative, and must be true. This is the leading thought which I mean to work out; but having a violent cold, my mind is somewhat dull and unfit for work.

It is not an enviable feeling, nor do I think there is much that is enviable in the feeling of any great duty. The luxury of doing good is sentimental trash and self-contradiction. How can any duty be done with ease? Is not all our life—our

lower life, at least—a miserable and fruitless attempt to reconcile the indulgence of our low desires for a summer holiday with the infinite and ever-increasing calls of conscience and law? Is not all our higher life a perpetual struggle to reach a horizon of duty, which is unbounded and ever-widening before us, as we fulfil its claims? Two things have brought this powerfully before me—one is the instruction of little Charlie, which has made me rouse myself to feel how much is to be done, and how fearful failure is; the other the meditation upon John x. 17, 18, on which I preach to-morrow—that sublime law of our humanity, as of His sacrifice, converted into blessedness by the truth that it is rendered to love, not hard necessity: 'Therefore doth my Father love me, because,' &c. Oh! shall we not try, cheerfully and sweetly, to take up this law, not as our severe obligation, but as our glorious gain? Let youthful freshness pass, worn looks come; and in me they are coming fast, and will come faster. What matter if, as the outward perish, the inward is renewed day by day? What matter if we see it in those that are dearest to us—if we know that in them, too, the same glorious reproduction is taking place?

What Channing says about intellectual cultivation not injuring moral character among the poor is true and not true—true, inasmuch as eventually, of course, things must find their level, but not true if he meant to say that the cultivation of the understanding alone improves character. I say it makes a bad character worse by multiplying power.* It is, of course, right to strengthen physical fibre, and he who refused it for fear of giving bad men the upper hand would talk absurdly; but he would be quite right in saying that mere cultivation of strength—albeit a gift of God's, to scorn which would be a reflection upon the wisdom of the Creator—only increases a bad man's power of evil. I say that though in the long run, perhaps after centuries of anarchy and blood, mental cultivation

* Channing expressly guards against this objection in his essay 'On the Elevation of the Working Classes.'

given alone will result in moral good, yet in the meanwhile, and for the present, the harvest will be bitter fruit and ranker villany. 'Knowledge puffeth up, but charity buildeth up.' Cultivated understanding has no necessary connection with strengthened, much less purified Will, in which moral excellence lies and in which alone. Bacon was

. The wisest, greatest, meanest of mankind.

I do not want a greater proof of the truth of this than in what is going on, perhaps this moment, or, at all events, a couple of hours ago, in the Institution. Practised disputants and sharpened intellects, these working-men have learned to deride God and trample upon the simplest and first principles of right and wrong. No, no, clear ideas do not advance the soul one step towards the power of doing what is right. It is a great thing when we learn that to understand, and appreciate, and even feel truth is not one atom of power given to the will to be true. The discipline of habits and acting does this, as old wise Aristotle long ago saw: we 'become good by doing good,' not by moral treatises, for goodness is the habit of the will, not perceptions or aspirations.

It seems to me no reflection on the wisdom of the Creator, that intellect cultivated alone will make the poor bad members of society. Any quality cultivated alone must destroy the harmony which the Creator intended, and produce a monster, in which part has the proportions of a giant, part the stunted withered limbs of a dwarf—a hideous unnatural whole. Look at a *Nisi Prius* lawyer, with clearest notions of evidence, principles of law, &c. &c., and withal how much of personal meanness and hatred, of pettifogging and professional lying!

I am not quite sure what Byron means by the tenth stanza. Probably he did not quite himself, for I should scarcely suppose he would say, in genuine and contrite humbleness, 'that the thorns which he had reaped were of the tree he planted.'

Perhaps it was truer than he meant, for all that vapid, sated, weary feeling, which he describes, was but the inevitable consequence linked to a life of excitement and indulged passion. I fancy that awful description of Tennyson's in 'The Vision of Sin' would truly describe his latter state, or, at all events, that state to which he was on the highroad, had he lived long enough. The hideous pleasantry of 'Don Juan' is a tolerably near approach to it, with a scepticism, more than incipient, of the goodness of others, and of those feelings which had once seemed half-divine, and strangely ended, like the fabulous mermaid beautiful above, in debasement and animalism. Yet I sometimes have thought 'Don Juan' was a symptom of amelioration, inasmuch as it was a symptom of reaction. All these feelings, which he once reckoned romantic and sublime, had conducted him—where? Consequently, those hideous sneers at fine feeling bespeak the arrival of a moment in which he could be no longer deceived by feelings, the end of which he distinctly saw. Unhappy enough to come to a state in which one can sneer at feelings, purest, holiest, early feelings, but better than that eternal delusion!'

LXXX.

September 1850.

My dear Sir,—Not knowing your designation and address, I must apologise if I have erred in the superscription of any letter to you.

It gives me great pleasure to find that the little address which has fallen into your hands has awakened any interest or sympathy.

The passage you refer to (page 17), 'To believe in God is simply the most difficult thing in the world,' is, I think, true. By God, I mean God as He is; not a first cause, nor a machinist, *Creator Mundi*, but One whose name is love immanent in us, meaning good and not evil, and having a right to our supreme adoration and reverence. I do not believe that

the understanding can discover Him. Paley's argument from design is valuable for those who vaguely feel Him, in order to give a stable solid ground for mere feeling to rest on—valuable also in defence of religion, as showing that it has something to say for itself, and forcing the intellectualist to treat it with courtesy; but for proving God's existence, or demonstrating to one well-informed infidel the falsity of his opinion, I believe it ever has been, and ever must be, powerless. For instance, it does not even touch the arguments of a pantheist.

There may be a First Cause, intelligent, designing, &c., and his name, if you like, may be God; but *so far* I only believe in him as I believe in electricity, gravitation, or any other cause, which assuredly has a great deal to do with my destiny. Believe, in the sense of trust, I do not. In morals we only believe so far as we *are*. Rochefoucault believed in no principle of action beyond selfishness and vanity. How could goodness, generosity, &c. be proved to him? By what evidence? There were the acts before him in history and human life proving design. Rochefoucauld, being vain and selfish, could not believe beyond, or make anything of such proofs. In opposition to the hypothesis of an intelligent Creator, I confess that the hypothesis of the Epicurean, or the Stoic, or the Pantheist, is at least able to make a long fight—far too long to infallibly secure victory in the limits of a life of thought. I do not think that where such men as Laplace, D'Alembert, Hume, Voltaire, have never seen any demonstration, the understanding can be the real court of appeal. Nay, I am ready to acknowledge that of the intellectual conception of God as Creator, Cause, Immanent Life, Lord of the World, &c., I am not prepared to assert or deny anything —I know nothing. My understanding feels itself utterly bewildered. I can affirm the contradictory, as well as the assertion, of any of these theories: and if I were compelled in intellectual gladiatorship to surrender them all, I should not feel in the smallest degree dismayed. My God is not the

philosopher's god; and in the most vigorous graspings of the intellect, I am often conscious of most losing hold of the Lord of Right and Love.

The evidence of goodness and wisdom in the external world is very questionable, in some moods at least. I found a caterpillar the other day writhing in anguish, and perforated by a dozen maggots, which had come from the eggs of an ichneumon-fly. It penetrates the skin of the living animal, leaves its eggs, and the grubs eat the creature alive by degrees. Is that goodness? Wonderful contrivance, certainly; but I should not accuse the understanding of anyone who preferred to believe in the Fate of the Stoics, necessitating this rather than an Omnipotent Will. I know that with the doctrine of the Cross, and the glimpse which it gives us into the grand law of the universe—Sacrifice, conscious and unconscious, for the life of others—this does not startle; but I profess that I have never yet found the argument from the understanding, or a hint of it, which can make it pleasant to believe in a God who has made such a provision as this.

Nor do I think that we get at the feeling through the understanding.* A slave is dependent on his tyrant master. A child depends upon his parent from day to day. But you may exhaust all your logic in proving to either that he must depend, or ought to depend; and at the end of all, you may be very far indeed from making one step towards the production of that 'consciousness of dependence,' which is implied in the words, 'I believe.' You can demonstrate power, but the master's right to enforce, the parent's love in requiring obedience—what arguments prove those when the will rebels? I am not sure that in this brief addition to the sentence of the address I have elucidated my meaning much; if not, I should be very happy to reply to any difficulties you may find in admitting my assertions.

* He adopts Coleridge's sense of the word, Understanding.

LXXXI.

Till this visit to Mr. V——, I never estimated the advantages which the residence of streets opposite the sea have. The exceeding beauty, freshness, and appearance of the sea and the sky in the early mornings, so different from the commonplace look of midday, have struck me very much. Midday is like mid-life, full of commonplace, of toil, and with less of romance; with most people at least. Morning and evening correspond with youth and age, in both of which there is a peculiar poetry. Yet to the eye that is open to see it, the midday and middle life have a wonder and mystery of their own; that is, to those who will look at either horizon, east or west—for the sun is above, unseen then, and only visible at the other periods—which, I take it, is the reason why the heavenly wonder seems to have passed from that period. 'Heaven lies around us in our infancy,' and I suppose the mystery of the grave brings heaven again round her decadence, just as the sun approaches the horizon again at evening. There is something more than fancy in this, for we are so constituted, that the analogy is felt by all of us. Morning, spring, youth—the feelings in them resemble each other, and re-suggest each other; so in autumn, evening, and age. And I fancy, that to get the uncommonplace feeling in the middle period, we must look up and remember that the light which lights us, with such a glare on the world and earth, is just as mysterious and sublime as when we saw all its tender pulses quivering in the morning.

I never, I think, felt the freshness of the world, and the truth that every morning is a new day—an universe unbroken and fresh for effort and discovery—so much as two mornings ago by the seaside. I do not mean that, even for a moment, it gave a conception of a fresh career or burst in life for me, but only that it gave me a conviction of a fact. To-day all is changed, but again I feel the advantage people here have from seeing the innumerable moods in which the sea presents itself. The

wind is driving and moaning wildly—the sea all white on the beach—dark and cleft into grand chasms beyond—and almost lost in not a dense but a semi-transparent mist towards the horizon; the carts and flys which go past the dining-room window are seen, as I sit, low down, as if they were on the brink of a precipice; large gulls, with their wild strange scream, heard every now and then, as they go down perpendicularly to the surface of the wave that has brought up their food, or floating about on the mist, colourless like shadows—'And I would that my tongue could utter—The thoughts that arise in me.' For at this moment my heart is in perfect unison with all this scene. I look, and look, until I wish I had no will. Yet the loss of will, with all the other faculties—memory, conscience, fancy—remaining, is surely the very condition of insanity; for the will alone keeps them from discord. I am not miserable, however. This soothes me. Am I justified, however, in all this utterance of egotistic sentiment? Feeling which ends in itself, and leads to nothing, ought to be stifled. It is not romance. Romance is—

> Imagination: honourable aims,
> Free commune with the choir that cannot die.

Romance may make a person make shipwreck in his voyage, but it never makes him anchor, more especially in stagnant water; whereas sensitiveness, and feeling merely intense, do.

LXXXII.

It is curious, when two minds come together, to find how large a department of that which is the very sphere of the activity and life of one, is a region unentered by, and absolutely forbidding to, the other. I cannot conceive how or why ——'s life is so lonely, for he enters into and likes all subjects which other men like, understands business and the world, and is perfectly secure from those dreadful rushings of the spirit into

unfathomable questions in which I have found no bottom, and shuddered to find none. He is safe, too, from that worst trial which comes from a disposition that has in it—I use the word in a good sense—romance; for how can such a mind be tortured, or how such a heart disappointed? I perceive,

To each his sufferings: all are men.

* * * * * * * *

That predominance of the meditative over the contriving faculties inevitably exposes one to dislike, as it did Hamlet, for now and then a certain tinge of seeming scorn is sure to mingle with its reveries on men and women. It is not, however, any feeling of superiority, but rather pity—not, I believe, insulting, though bitter. 'Quintessence of dust,' applied to humanity, is a mixture of regard and regret for frailness. It is dust, but quintessence of it. So, too, 'Frailty, thy name is woman'—who does not feel that there is at least as much tenderness and mourning in that, as bitterness? Is it not disappointed worship that still hangs fondly lingering before the desecrated shrine? However, as it is somewhat subtle to extract this, it is unwise to utter these amalgams of feeling aloud, for very few will pause to analyse and perceive that two metals, one at least a precious one, are fused together.

'Blessed are they that mourn.'

—— asked what that means. Is it not a revelation of the uses of adversity?—and does not the whole teaching of the Cross, in accordance with this, say that sorrow and pain alone wake us up to reality, and that trial is a truer refiner of character than pleasure? Of course, this is not our first impression; it needs a revelation to tell it, or at all events to interpret our own experience. You have a proof of that in a child's wonder at the expression, for how should a happy careless child divine such a mystery?

I will grieve not, rather find
Strength in what remains behind. . . .
In the soothing thoughts which spring
Out of human suffering.

I cannot tell her the meaning of those words of Christ. Life alone can apply the meaning, or explain how true they are; for, indeed, they are only subjectively true, deriving their truth, not from sorrow and pain in themselves, but from the tempers on which they fall; so that they are not true always —to some never true. Yet how deep they are, and how such convictions alone can make this life intelligible or tolerable!

That is a blessed faith which feels that there cannot be clouds and gloom for ever—which, ever resting in conviction of what God is, hopes and knows that 'joy cometh in the morning.' That cheerful undespairing temper marks Shakespeare's thought throughout; in conjunction with that text, 'Blessed are they that mourn,' let it mark yours.

LXXXIII.

I am persuaded there is more in reserved people than we give them credit for; they often conceal a deep and real feeling under an imperturbable exterior. . . .

'The course of true love never did run smooth;' but then that means, I fancy, that it never shows itself to be true—never exhibits its strength—until rough obstacles destroy its smoothness. Many an attachment would have shown all the impetuosity of a dammed-up stream had it been checked, which, under existing circumstances, seems to flow monotonously and uninterestingly enough. The St. Lawrence is tame some miles above Niagara. No doubt the romance of the affair you mention has suffered, but I doubt whether the journey of life will be a bit less happy for that. There is a great difference between travelling one hundred miles in England and the same distance in South Africa, where Cumming spanned and inspanned with considerable difficulty every night and morning; and the romance of the pathless travel was immeasurably the greater, yet the douce gentlemen who travel to London and back every day do not less truly attain

the end and object of travelling. Moreover, marriages which had romance in their preparatory circumstances, do they really turn out better than others? I recollect being pained with this feeling when quite a young child, on reading the sequel to the romantic adventures and final union of Prince Camaralzaman and Princess Badoura, in the 'Arabian Nights.' They were all-in-all to each other—their constancy tried for years; and in after-life all went wrong. It struck me, little as I then knew of life, as true to life, and so did some of Crabbe's painful but nature-like tales. It is well to feel how much of happiness is gained, or how much of wretchedness is spared, by the absence of those violent feelings which exhaust life, and leave the character dishevelled, the features worn with a graver as deep as that which sharp anguish cuts into the cheeks—

Scathed by fiery passion's brunt.

How many such countenances we see with the marks of strong undisciplined feeling in them! I saw a lady of fifty to-day with cheeks as calm as if she were twenty; yet not apathetic, but wise, full of self-control, affectionate, and benign in manner. You felt that there was in store for her—

An old age, serene and bright,
And calm as is a Lapland night.

I felt that self-rule and delivery from intense emotion and violent *accés* are the necessary qualifications for growth of character and the power of completing anything on this earth. Everything must pay its price, and romance in the feelings or circumstances of courtship often pays a very, very heavy one.

LXXXIV.

They all came in from Lindfield yesterday. I went out to fetch them, and spent some hours in the village of Lindfield itself, where I strongly felt the beauty and power of English

country scenery and life to calm, if not to purify, the hearts of those whose lives are habitually subjected to such influences. Not that human nature is better there, but life is more natural, and real nature I hold to be the great law of our life, both physical and religious. Physical does, in fact, by derivation, mean natural—physics being the study of nature. I am sure that religion is the recall to real instead of perverted nature, just as the medicinal art is the recall to natural health of body. There are false systems in both, as well as true, being marked in each case by the artificial and unnatural mode of dealing with the diseased part. You would give Allopathy as an instance of this, and I should give what St. Paul calls 'bodily exercise,'—literally, asceticism. Whereas Christ invariably appeals to unsophisticated nature, says 'Sin no more,' just as if we should say, 'You have eaten too much and drunk too much, poor man; well, eat less and drink less,' there is no magic besides that which will cure you, no doses of humbug, copious or infinitesimal.

I have begun to read Wordsworth's 'Retrospect' * again, and have persevered, in spite of the dulness, which at first deterred me; I rejoice extremely that I did. I find it deeply interesting, now that I have got a clue to his object, which is to show how influences are provided for us, if we will once surrender ourselves to them, partly passively, partly actively, instead of inventing artificial discipline; and that those influences, being God's, are the best—slow, sure, and purifying. It is a history of his own life, and, being a reflection of it, is apparently monotonous, having no shocks or striking incidents; but his intention is to show how, just from this very monotony, a character of purity and strength was built up. Some passages are excessively beautiful, the diction always pure and clear, like an atmosphere of crystal pellucidness, through which you see all objects without being diverted aside to consider the medium through which they are seen. When you do pause

* 'The Prelude.'

to think of this, you remark, 'What a clear atmosphere! what pure water! or, what transparent crystal!' but at first you remark only the object. This, too, I observed of Stanley's 'Life of Arnold.' Everyone spoke of Arnold, no one stopped to observe how well Stanley had done it; Stanley had merged himself and become transparent. Lord Lansdowne was the first whom I ever heard remark upon the biographer, though I had been on the watch long to see if anyone would.

For myself, never have I felt a more fixed and settled depression. The thought of fixture here, except under the alternative of great pecuniary sacrifice, has been overwhelming at some moments, and at others, a dead, heavy weight: to be for ever, *en evidence*, especially for one so unfitted as I am for it by tastes and predilections; yet now that the die is cast, I will not shrink nor cast a look behind, but endeavour to be equal to the hour, and do my duty.

The day is gloomy, oppressive in the house—what it is outside I do not know. Thought has flowed sluggishly, like a thin green stream, in a dead level, without health and without clearness; zest and interest are wanting, but I put down a part of this to the weather, though it is only a continuation of what has been unaltered indifference to almost all things. I am struggling against it as yet with poor success, but I hold it a duty—a real and paramount duty—and I will not tamely yield. I know how powerless a motive 'our own sake' is to make us work with interest. It is like taking a constitutional with the painful consciousness in every movement that it is for the sake of health, instead of health coming while we are seeking, not health, but an object. Such I find the use of shooting, riding, &c., and such must be the way of getting good from interest in others. You cannot wake up in them an interest by feeling it will do good to yourself; the interest must have no reflex motive, or else it will do no good. Hence the uselessness of preaching to do right, to be charitable, &c. &c., because it will make you happy now and hereafter. No

doubt it will, but you cannot be charitable because it will. Hence, too, the folly of the system which resolves all our actions into a refined selfishness. So far as you try to be good, in order to be personally happy, you miss happiness—a great and beautiful law of our being. Heavenly happiness is the result of our own energy, and cannot be poured upon the soul, and is almost entirely independent of circumstances—made by us, not for us.

I am ashamed of the hasty way in which I dismissed Wordsworth's 'Prelude.' It is a noble work, one that has made my eyes fill again and again, not by its pathos, but by its lofty tone and translucent purity: a severe work, worthy of patriarchal times, when men went out into the fields to meditate at eventide, and disciplined their spirits by the pure influences of rock, hill, stream, forest, twilight, and darkness, and that too, as in Isaac's case, on the eve of marriage.

Do not fear with regard to ——; all will be well. Affectionateness, maidenly self-possession, and a quiet spirit are more likely to bud into a beautiful character hereafter than that impetuosity of sentiment which too often makes life the prey of wild and self-destructive passions. Principle is a higher thing than feeling, and will stand life's terrible test far better.

LXXXV.

November 12.

I confess the awful mystery of life, and the perplexity which hangs around the question—what it is, and what it all means. Nevertheless, I am persuaded—as persuaded as of anything I can be in this world—that the meaning is good and not evil—good, I trust, to the individual as well as to the whole. There is a wondrous alchemy in time and the power of God to transmute our faults, errors, sorrows—nay, our sins themselves—into golden blessings; a truth which always appears to me prominent in the history of the Fall. The curses on man and

woman, toil, &c. are all, in the process of time, changed into benedictions; the woman's lot itself, of subjugation and pain, becoming the very channel of her best powers of character, the condition of her devotion and her meekness. It is only the tempting devil-snake, in whose curse there is no element of alteration: only apparently a degradation, a slighter doom, no pain—better for him had it been so, for anguish might have slowly worked out change—but to crawl, and creep, and eat the dust of lower Being for ever. A truth for which my whole spirit blesses and adores the Ever Just. 'Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted.' —— asked the meaning of this; surely it is plain? The tears which destroy the beauty of the outward man, channel his cheeks, cut his features with the sharp graver of anguish, are doing a glorious work on the spirit within, which is becoming fresh with all young and living feelings.

* * * * * * * *

I have just returned from the committee relating to the 'Protestant and Anti-Popery,' &c. &c. meeting on Thursday, into which I was hooked. They asked me to speak on that day. I refused; on which the vicar begged for a show of hands, and they were raised, and the thing carried by clerical acclamation. Only conceive that! Of course I have still my option.

LXXXVI.

To-day I had a long and strange interview with a lady who has recently become a member of the congregation. . . . . She asked me if I had ever known a case of trial so severe as hers. 'Yes,' I replied; 'numbers; it is the case of all. Suffering is very common, so is disappointment.' 'Are our affections to be all withered?'—'Very often, I believe.' 'Then why were they given me?'—'I am sure I cannot tell you that, but I suppose it would not have been very good for you to have had it all your own way.' 'Then, do you think I am better for

this blighting succession of griefs?'—'I do not know, but I know you ought to be.' Wordsworth was lying open on the table, and I pointed to her these lines:—

> Then was the truth received into my heart,
> That under heaviest sorrow earth can bring,
> If from the affliction somewhere do not grow,
> Honour, which could not else have been a faith,
> An elevation and a sanctity;
> If new strength be not given nor old restored,
> The blame is ours, not nature's.

The deep undertone of this world is sadness: a solemn bass occurring at measured intervals, and heard through all other tones. Ultimately, all the strains of this world's music resolve themselves into that tone; and I believe that, rightly felt, the Cross, and the Cross alone, interprets the mournful mystery of life—the sorrow of the Highest, the Lord of Life; the result of error and sin, but ultimately remedial, purifying, and exalting.

LXXXVII.

I read, or rather studied, 'Macbeth' through last night, sitting up very late, and never felt half its beauty—beauty as distinct from power—before.

Macready is now giving his farewell appearances, and 'Macbeth' is for to-night. I was strangely tempted to go. Macready nobly tried to purge the stage from all its evils, and Shakespeare is free from the strong objections I have to any acting which merely exhibits dangerous feeling in its might. A friend had taken places and I had resolved not—nevertheless, I felt the temptation strong last night. The murder-scene became so vivid that I actually felt a sensation of creeping awe as I went up the stairs of the silent house, and in very shame was obliged to walk down again through the dark passages, to convince myself that I was not a child haunted with unreal terrors. I felt the tears actually start in reading that noble scene in which Macduff's fidelity to honour and goodness is tested by

Malcolm. Macduff's burst of disappointment, on discovering that the prince, to whom all his heart's homage had been given, is, as he supposes, unworthy of it, touched me until my heart seemed too large. Those fine lines (Act IV. Scene 3)—

> Fit to govern! No, not to live;

and then, when Macduff has the man he hates with noble hatred at last 'within sword's reach,' I could have almost shouted. I felt as if to have a firm grip of a sword in a villain's heart were the intensest rapture this earth has to give—the only thing which such as Macduff had worth living for. Places were taken for two nights—'Othello' and 'Macbeth'—but I could not trust myself to either.

I have been trying lately to regulate my outward life somewhat more satisfactorily than usual—my papers, my study, my hours, in order that the inward life may have a faint chance of growing into form. The outward is at least within our power—whether the inward is I do not know; but the one acts upon the other, and it is a duty, at least, to do all that can be done. That all but omniscient Shakespeare says, in reply to Macbeth's

> Canst thou not minister to a mind diseased,
> Pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow,
> Raze out the written troubles of the brain,
> And with some sweet oblivious antidote
> Cleanse the stuffed bosom of that perilous stuff
> Which weighs upon the heart? . . . .
> Therein the patient
> Must minister to himself.

Then Macbeth says:—

> Come, put mine armour on, give me my staff, &c.

wisely resolving upon present acting.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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A SELECTION FROM THE NOTICES

OF

MR. ROBERTSON'S SERMONS.

A SELECTION FROM THE NOTICES OF

MR. ROBERTSON'S SERMONS.

(Including the Two unfavourable Notices that have appeared in 'THE RECORD.')

[BLACKWOOD'S MAGAZINE, August 1862.]

'While hapless Englishmen complain in the papers, and in private, in many a varied wail, over the sermons they have to listen to, it is very apparent that the work of the preacher has not fallen in any respect out of estimation. Here is a book which has gone through as great a number of editions as the most popular novel. It bears Mudie's stamp upon its dingy boards, and has all those marks of arduous service which are only to be seen in books which belong to great public libraries. It is thumbed, dog's-eared, pencil-marked, worn by much perusal. Is it then a novel? On the contrary, it is a volume of sermons. A fine, tender, and lofty mind, full of thoughtfulness, full of devotion, has herein left his legacy to his country. It is not rhetoric or any vulgar excitement of eloquence that charms so many readers to the book, so many hearers to this preacher's feet. It is not with the action of a Demosthenes, with outstretched arms and countenance of flame, that he presses his gospel upon his audience. On the contrary, when we read those calm and lofty utterances, this preacher seems seated, like his Master, with the multitude palpitating round, but no agitation or passion in his own thoughtful, contemplative breast. The Sermons of Robertson, of Brighton, have few of the exciting qualities of oratory. Save for the charm of a singularly pure and lucid style, their almost sole attraction consists in their power of instruction, in their faculty of opening up the mysteries of life and truth. It is pure teaching, so far as that ever can be administered to a popular audience, which is offered to us in these volumes.'

[EDINBURGH CHRISTIAN MAGAZINE.]

'They are the Sermons of a bold, uncompromising thinker—of a man resolute for the truth of God, and determined in the strength of God's grace to make that truth clear, to brush away all the fine-spun sophis-

tries and half-truths by which the cunning sins of men have hidden it. . . . There must be a great and true heart, where there is a great and true preacher. And in that, beyond everything else, lay the secret of Mr. Robertson's influence. His Sermons show evidence enough of acute logical power. His analysis is exquisite in its subtleness and delicacy. . . . With Mr. Robertson style is but the vehicle, not the substitute for thought. Eloquence, poetry, scholarship, originality—his Sermons show proof enough of these to put him on a level with the foremost men of his time. But, after all, their charm lies in the warm, loving, sympathetic heart, in the well-disciplined mind of the true Christian, in his noble scorn of all lies, of all things mean and crooked, in his brave battling for right, even when wrong seems crowned with success, in his honest simplicity and singleness of purpose, in the high and holy tone—as if, amid the discord of earth, he heard clear, though far off, the perfect harmony of heaven; in the fiery earnestness of his love for Christ, the devotion of his whole being to the goodness and truth revealed in him.'

[Church of England Monthly Review.]

'It is hardly too much to say, that had the Church of England produced no other fruit in the present century, this work alone would be amply sufficient to acquit her of the charge of barrenness. . . . The reputation of Mr. Robertson's Sermons is now so wide-spread, that any commendation of ours may seem superfluous. We will therefore simply, in conclusion, recommend such of our readers as have not yet made their acquaintance, to read them carefully and thoughtfully, and they will find in them more deeply suggestive matter than in almost any book published in the present century.'

[Morning Post.]

'They are distinguished by masterly exposition of Scriptural truths, and the true spirit of Christian charity.'

[British Quarterly.]

'These Sermons are full of thought and beauty, and admirable illustrations of the ease with which a gifted and disciplined mind can make the obscure transparent, the difficult plain. There is not a Sermon that does not furnish evidence of originality without extravagance, of discrimination without tediousness, and of piety without cant or conventionalism.'

[Eclectic Review.]

'We hail with unaffected delight the appearance of these volumes. The Sermons are altogether out of the common style. They are strong, free, and beautiful utterances of a gifted and cultivated mind. Occasionally, the expression of theological sentiment fails fully to represent our own thought, and we sometimes detect tendencies with which we cannot sympathise; but, taken as a whole, the discourses are fine specimens of a high order of preaching.'

[Guardian.]

'Very beautiful in feeling, and occasionally striking and forcible in conception to a remarkable degree.....Even in the imperfect shape in which their deceased author left them, they are very remarkable compositions.'

[Christian Remembrancer.]

'We should be glad if all preachers more united with ourselves preached such Sermons as these.'

[Westminster Review.]

'To those who affectionately remember the author, they will recal, though imperfectly, his living eloquence and his living truthfulness.'

[Globe.]

'Mr. Robertson, of Brighton, is a name familiar to most of us, and honoured by all to whom it is familiar. A true servant of Christ, a bold and heart-stirring preacher of the Gospel, his teaching was unlike the teaching of most clergymen, for it was beautified and intensified by genius. New truth, new light, streamed from each well-worn text when he handled it.'

[National Review.]

'A volume of very fine Sermons, quite equal to the previous series.'

[Brighton Examiner.]

'There is in the Sermons in this volume the same freshness, vigour of thought and felicity of expression, as characterised whatever Mr. Robertson said.'

[Economist.]

'Mr. Robertson's Sermons have the great and rare merit of neutralising, by a more charitable and affectionate spirit, and by a wider intelligence, all that may appear rigid and *doctrinaire* in the Church of England. The result seems to have been his special mission: it most fully explains the mind of the man.....We recommend the Sermons to the perusal of our readers. They will find in them thought of so rare and beautiful a description, an earnestness of mind so steadfast in the search of truth, and a charity so pure and all-embracing, that we cannot venture to offer praise, which would be, in this case, almost as presumptuous as criticism.'

[Saturday Review.]

'When Mr. Robertson died, his name was scarcely known beyond the circle of his own private friends, and of those among whom he had laboured in his calling. Now, every word he wrote is eagerly sought for and affectionately treasured up, and meets with the most reverent and admiring welcome from men of all parties and all shades of opinion. . . . . To those that find in his writings what they themselves want, he is a teacher quite beyond comparison—his words having a meaning, his thoughts a truth and depth, which they cannot find elsewhere. And they never look to him in vain. . . . . He fixes himself upon the recollection as a most original and profound thinker, and as a man in whom excellence puts on a new form. . . . . There are many persons, and the number increases every year, to whom Robertson's writings are the most stable, satisfactory, and exhaustless form of religious teaching which the nineteenth century has given—the most wise, suggestive, and practical.'

[Brighton Herald.]

'To our thinking, no compositions of the same class, at least since the days of Jeremy Taylor, can be compared with these Sermons delivered to the congregation of Trinity Chapel, Brighton, by their late minister. They have that power over the mind which belongs only to the highest works of genius: they stir the soul to its inmost depths: they move the affections, raise the imagination, bring out the higher and spiritual part of our nature by the continual appeal that is made to it, and tend to make us, at the same time, humble and aspiring—merciful to others and doubtful of ourselves.'

[From a SERMON preached at the CONSECRATION of the BISHOP of NORWICH, by the REV. J. H. GURNEY, late of MARYLEBONE.]

'I do not commit myself to all his theology; I may differ from the preacher in some things, and listen doubtfully to others. But I know of no modern sermons at once so suggestive, and so inspiriting, with reference to the whole range of Christian duty. He is fresh and original without being recondite; plain-spoken without severity; and discusses some of the exciting topics of the day without provoking strife, or lowering his tone as a Christian teacher. He delivers his message, in fact, like one who is commissioned to call men off from trifles and squabbles, and conventional sins and follies, to something higher and nobler than their common life; like a man in earnest, too, avoiding technicalities, speaking his honest mind in phrases that are his own, and with a directness from which there is no escape. O that a hundred like him were given us by God, and placed in prominent stations throughout our land!'

[GUARDIAN.]

'Without anything of that artificial symmetry which the traditional division into heads was apt to display, they present each reflection in a distinct method of statement, clearly and briefly worked out; the sentences are short and terse, as in all popular addresses they should be; the thoughts are often very striking, and entirely out of the track of ordinary sermonising. In matters of doctrine such novelty is sometimes unsafe; but the language is that of one who tries earnestly to penetrate into the very centre of the truth he has to expound, and differs as widely as possible from the sceptic's doubt or the controversialist's mistake. More frequently Mr. Robertson deals with questions of practical life, of public opinion, and of what we may call social casuistry—turning the light of Christian ethics upon this unnoticed though familiar ground. The use of a carriage on Sunday, the morality of feeing a railway porter against his employer's rules, are topics not too small for illustration or application of his lessons in divine truth.'

[BRIGHTON GAZETTE.]

'As an author, Mr. Robertson was, in his lifetime, unknown; for, with the exception of one or two addresses, he never published, having a singular disinclination to bring his thoughts before the public in the form of published sermons. As a minister, he was beloved and esteemed for his unswerving fidelity to his principles and his fearless propagation

of his religious views. As a townsman, he was held in the highest estimation; his hand and voice being ever ready to do all in his power to advance the moral and social position of the working man. It was not till after his decease, which event created a sensation and demonstration such as Brighton never before or since witnessed, that his works were subjected to public criticism. It was then found that in the comparatively retired minister of Trinity Chapel there had existed a man possessed of consummate ability and intellect of the highest order; that the sermons laid before his congregation were replete with the subtleties of intellect, and bore evidence of the keenest perception and most exalted catholicity. His teaching was of an extremely liberal character, and if fair to assign a man possessed of such a universality of sympathy to any party, we should say that he belonged to what is denominated the 'Broad Church.' We, with many others, cannot agree in the fullest extent of his teaching, but, at the same time, feel bound to accord the tribute due to his genius.'

[Morning Chronicle.]

'A volume of very excellent Sermons, by the late lamented incumbent of Trinity Chapel, Brighton.'

On the '*Analysis of Mr. Tennyson's In Memoriam*':—

[Guardian.]

'An endeavour to give, in a few weighty words, the key-note (so to speak) of each poem in the series. Those will best appreciate the amount of success attained by Mr. Robertson who try to do the same work better.'

From a few of the Notices on Mr. Robertson's '*Lectures on the Epistles to the Corinthians*':—

[Morning Post.]

'It was Mr. Robertson's custom every Sunday afternoon, instead of preaching from one text, to expound an entire chapter of some book in

the Scriptures. The present volume is made up from notes of fifty-six discourses of this kind. "Some people were startled by the introduction of what they called secular subjects into the pulpit. But the lecturer in all his ministrations refused to recognise the distinction so drawn. He said that the whole life of a Christian was sacred—that common every-day doings, whether of a trade, or of a profession, or the minuter details of a woman's household life, were the arenas in which trial and temptation arose; and that therefore it became the Christian minister's duty to enter into this family working life with his people, and help them to understand its meaning, its trials, and its compensations." It is enough to add that the lectures now given to the public are written in this spirit.'

[CRITIC.]

'Such discourses as these before us, so different from the shallow rhapsodies or tedious hair-splitting which are now so much in vogue, may well make us regret that Mr. Robertson can never be heard again in the pulpit. This single volume would in itself establish a reputation for its writer.

[BRIGHTON HERALD.]

'. . . Were there no name on the title-page, the spirit which shines forth in these lectures could but be recognised as that of the earnest, true-hearted man, the deep thinker, the sympathiser with all kinds of human trouble, the aspirant for all things holy, and one who joined to these rare gifts, the faculty of speaking to his fellow-men in such a manner as to fix their attention and win their love. . . . . In whatever spirit the volume is read—of doubt, of criticism, or of full belief in the truth it teaches—it can but do good; it can but leave behind the conviction that here was a genuine, true-hearted man, gifted with the highest intellect, inspired by the most disinterested motives and the purest love for his fellow-men, and that the fountain at which he warmed his heart and kindled his eloquence was that which flows from Christ.'

[BRITISH QUARTERLY REVIEW.]

'This volume will be a welcome gift to many an intelligent and devout mind. There are few of our modern questions, theological or

ecclesiastical, that do not come up for discussion in the course of these Epistles to the Christians at Corinth.'

[MORNING HERALD.]

'No one can read these lectures without being charmed by their singular freshness and originality of thought, their earnest, simple eloquence, and their manly piety. There is no mawkish sentiment, no lukewarm, semi-religious twaddle, smacking of the *Record*; no proclamation of party views or party opinions, but a broad, healthy, living, and fervent exposition of one of the most difficult books in the Bible, Every page is full of personal earnestness and depth of feeling; but every page is also free from the slightest trace of vanity and egotism. The words come home to the reader's heart as the utterance of a sincere man who felt every sentence which flowed from his lips.'

[PRESS.]

'One of the most marked features of these lectures is the deep feeling which the preacher had of the emptiness and hollowness of the conventional religionism of the day. The clap-trap of popular ministers, the pride and uncharitableness of exclusive Evangelicanism, the pomp and pretension of ritualism and priestly affectation—the miserable Pharisaism which is lurking underneath them all—form the subject of many strikingly true and often cutting remarks. He has no patience with the unrealities of sectarian purism and pedantic orthodoxy. His constant cry, the constant struggle of his soul, is for reality. Hence while his views of objective truth are at times deficient, or, at least, very imperfectly stated, he leaves a deep impress of subjective religion upon the mind, by a style of teaching which, far from uninstructive, is yet more eminently suggestive.'

The Editor of the Sermons has thought it right to reprint, in contrast with the foregoing selection from warmly appreciating notices, the two following notices, from the columns of

THE RECORD.

The following appeared on the issue of the First Series:—

'The great popularity and early death of the late gifted Rev. F. W. Robertson have invested the publication of these Sermons with more

than usual interest. We greatly regret that we cannot express a favourable opinion of them. The remarkable chasteness and beauty of their style, their originality, and the abundant stores of varied thought they contain, render them very fascinating; but we are bound to add that, in our judgment, they are as dangerous as they are fascinating. The higher qualities of a Christian ministry are absent; they are deficient in close logical power, and contain very little that is calculated to touch the conscience. Above all, when we look for the solid basis of divine truth, they are found to be singularly unsatisfactory, The great distinctive Christian doctrines find little expression in them, and are rather made the themes of intellectual refinements than of Christian comfort and exhortation. Human sin, the great doctrine of the Atonement, and, above all, the sole sufficiency of the Holy Ghost to convert and sanctify, as great vital truths, are wanting in these discourses; while we trace here and there, in their treatment of Scripture, the dangerous rationalistic tendencies of the day. They appear to have sprung from a mind earnest, ardent, and affectionate in no common degree, but perverted by a morbid dislike of 'the worn-out conventionalities' of religion, and apt in this feeling to confound the eternal verities of the faith with the modes of expression in which they have been clothed. If the warming eloquence, the graceful diction, and the singular power of touching the human heart which are found in these sermons had been concentrated *on the great saving doctrines of the Gospel*, they would have constituted a ministry singular in power and rich in usefulness.'

The following is almost unique as a specimen of criticism. It is contained in a review of a work entitled —

Pastoral Duties. Six Discourses on Pastoral Duties, preached before the University of Dublin. Being the Donnellan Lectures for the year 1860. By WILLIAM ATKINS, D.D. &c., and Examining Chaplain to the Lord Bishop of Derry. London: Rivingtons. 1861.

In these Lectures there are very many things of which we might speak in terms of high praise, were the parts of which we approve separated

from the parts of which we disapprove. We shall not attempt to characterise the volume as a whole, but satisfy ourselves with giving the following foot-note. It is found on page 121 :—

'No one can read the outlines of Robertson's Sermons (that is, the late F. Robertson, of Brighton) without being more indebted to them than he can tell. They are truly wonderful in their suggestive power. It would be unpardonable presumption in me to undertake to praise or recommend these well-known volumes to my brethren ; yet, in referring to them, I must caution my young friends that there are unsound views put forward in them with respect to the Atonement ; and fanciful illustrations with regard to the Sacrament of Baptism, not in accordance with the teaching of the Church. But, with these drawbacks, Robertson's Sermons will be found most valuable to those who adopt the method of composition which I have recommended in my second lecture. They are too much of outline and unfinished sketch to be of use to those who merely copy.'

'This is like recommending a house to a man as "a most desirable residence," with the "drawbacks" of its being founded on sand, and having a rather "fanciful" roof; or a ship as a good sea-boat, with the "drawbacks" that there is a leak in her hold, and that her rigging is rotten. But, great as these "drawbacks" are, the half has not been told. Mr. Robertson's Sermons, as most of our readers know, are unsound on the inspiration of the Word of God, on the doctrine of the Christian Sabbath, and on almost every doctrine of importance you can name. A worse book to recommend to young or old you could hardly find ; for everywhere there is one perpetual sneer at all the Evangelical doctrines of the Word of God. Had Dr. Atkins given evidence of ignorance of Mr. Robertson's books, we should have satisfied ourselves with a protest ; but he shows in this volume that he knows them well. In fact, there are no books quoted more frequently throughout his volume than those of Mr. Robertson ; and always, so far as we have marked, with approval.'

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